


# Reading is Fun!

*Edited by*  
FRANCES  RICHMAN

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*Illustrated by*  
GUY BROWN WISER

CHICAGO  
LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA



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### PLAY BALL!

*Tim Marks has to choose between loyalty to his team and to his brother in this thrilling baseball story.*

by C. W. Whittemore

Tim Marks was circling beneath a high fly when sudden cheers from the stands made him turn his head in a swift, searching glance. Here they came: the Troy High team, their red and white stockinged legs flashing as they trotted through the gate. Yes, and more important, leading them was his brother Jack, whose tall form he had not seen for weeks. Tim wheeled impulsively to the left fielder, who even in practice had raced over to back him up. "Take it," Tim called. "Going to see Jack."

Near the third base line, the assistant coach frowned. He whacked at a pebble with his long, light bat. "What the blazes!" Then he saw the Troy captain halt and wave

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to his younger brother. The coach chuckled to the sub who was shagging throw-ins. "Look at that kid leave a fly hanging in the air just to say 'howdy' to his brother. Have to watch that youngster. He's playing for us—but I'll bet he's praying for Troy."

Although Tim Marks was not actually praying that Troy would defeat Gardner, he had many reasons for wishing his brother's team success. Troy needed to win, for it was a half game behind the County League leaders, and today's contest completed the schedule. Should Troy win, the play-off would put the championship within its reach. The league standing of Gardner High, on the other hand, would not be changed by either victory or defeat.

Moreover, in Tim's estimation, Jack Marks was the finest brother that ever preceded a fellow on the family roll call. When, a few months before, a business transfer of his father's had taken the family to Gardner, Tim had begged his parents to let him stay in Troy with Jack. But his pleading had been in vain. They would not have permitted the older brother to remain, they declared, had he not been a senior and captain of the baseball team. And although Tim had, at Jack's urging, tried out for and made the Gardner team his first year, it had not seemed quite right. While still in the lower grades he had dreamed of the time when he, too, would be playing for Troy, facing his brother across the diamond. Hadn't he trained himself for an outfield position, so that he wouldn't have to compete with Jack, who was a catcher?

Small wonder that young Tim Marks was suffering the

inner confusion of divided allegiance; small wonder, also, since he had often and openly boasted of his brother's prowess to his teammates, that the assistant coach had said, "Have to watch that youngster."

The head coach, however, scoffed at his assistant's fear. "Nope; that kid is a ball player—or has the makings of one. If he lies down on us, I'll eat my hat sure enough."

The assistant shrugged. "I hope you're right—that wilted Panama of yours would be tough chewing."

The visiting team started to practice while the Gardner nine relaxed on the bench. Perhaps the head coach noted the hardly veiled admiration with which Tim watched his brother throw to the bases. Casually he called his center fielder aside. "Jack's quite a lad, isn't he?" he suggested.

Tim answered promptly, almost eagerly. "Yeah. Got a great arm, hasn't he?"

The coach sobered, stroked his chin and turned full upon Tim. "But he isn't going to catch you going down to second—or off base today, is he?"

Tim seemed puzzled, then flushed.

The coach grinned as he saw anger sparkle in the fielder's blue eyes. "Of course he isn't," he added hastily. "I was just kidding. But, I know how you feel about Jack—and maybe about this game. You sort of hope betwixt and between—don't you?"

Tim hesitated and then answered squarely, "I'll be honest. If there are any breaks—lucky breaks, I mean—I hope Jack gets his share."

The coach slapped his shoulder and laughed. "That's

fair enough, I guess. But let's play the game to win—or not at all."

Gardner was a baseball city. Despite the fact that this was the last school game of the season, and the team hopelessly behind in the race for the championship, hundreds of local fans crammed the bleachers and stands. And in the third base section waved Troy's red and white banners. Almost the entire student body had motored across country to give support to their nine.

The umpire tucked the protector beneath his chin, gave the plate a final flick with his cap, adjusted his mask, and stepped behind the Gardner catcher. There was a moment of silence. The fielders were tensely poised in their positions; the catcher, with feet braced far apart, held his mitt outstretched as a target for the first ball; the pitcher stood on his mound, gloved fingers nervously patting the white sphere. The umpire leaned forward and his voice boomed across the field.

"Play ball!"

Waves of pent up cheers promptly rolled across the diamond. The pitcher's arm shot upward, and without a preliminary wind-up he whipped a straight ball across the inside corner. The batter made no effort to hit it, obviously having been instructed to let the first one ride by.

"Strike One."

A shout from the Gardner stands gave approval. A second strike, and then Troy's lead-off man tapped a swift grounder toward the shortstop, who snapped the ball to first ahead of the runner. One down. The Gardner students sent up a cheer for the shortstop, while from the Troy

stands came staccato encouragement for the next batter.

Gardner's elation was short-lived. The Troy nine held the highest team batting average in the league, and they were not to be denied. The second man drove the first ball over the third baseman's head for an easy single. The next man walked, and with one out and two on base, Jack Marks swung his heavy bat across the plate.

Out in center field Tim Marks trotted backward, edging a bit into the right fielder's territory, for his brother batted left handed. He spat upon his glove, leaned forward with hands on his knees, then straightened and shifted his position nervously. He found himself wishing that Jack would hit it—but not to him. Anywhere but center field.

Chance granted his wish. The tall catcher scooped a fast-breaking outdrop in a long arc over the first baseman's head. The weight of heavy shoulders was behind the ball, and when the fielder retrieved it, one man had scored and another was rounding third. By a perfect relay to second baseman and catcher, the next Troy runner was nailed at the plate, and Jack Marks held at second. The Troy stands were in pandemonium. A run in the first inning. Against the weak-hitting Gardner team, this might prove to be all that was required for victory, and a tie for the championship. The Gardner stands were silent.

Jack Marks was left at second, the next man flying out to left field.

Tim hurried across the diamond and caught up with his brother. "Great work, Jack," he said. "What's that boost your average to? Around 410, isn't it?"

Jack grinned, and reached for the shin protectors brought

out by the Troy mascot. "Hanged if I know. You seem to keep track of my average better'n I do."

The voice of his coach was brusque as Tim neared the bench. "All right, you fellows. What's a single run? A lucky break. Let's go after that run—and a couple more."

Tim looked up from the long row of bats, but the coach was not facing his way. He resented the implication that Jack's two-bagger was simply luck—probably the coach didn't believe it, either, but was encouraging his men.

Because of his small stature, Tim was hard to pitch to, and this advantage, coupled with his cool eye in not offering to swing at bad balls, had won for him the lead-off.

The coach beckoned to him. "Get on," he snapped. "Somehow, anyhow—get on. If the first one is good, hit it. We've got to get that run back."

Tim stepped into the batter's box, scuffing the soft gravel with his cleats. He tilted the visor of his cap, and faced the pitcher. He felt his brother's tall presence behind him, but he did not turn. It was a queer sensation. Without looking, he knew his brother was signaling for a ball which might start him toward a strike-out—his brother, who a few moments ago he had hoped would get a hit. Would Jack be calling for a high out-shoot, his one tempting weakness?

The pitcher was winding up. With feet close together, lightly poised, Tim waited. As the ball left the pitcher's hand, Tim heard his brother's warning, "Watch out, Kid."

The pitcher had stepped toward third base; it was a cross fire, shoulder high, an out-shoot that probably would

break early and might cut the inside corner. He had orders to hit if it was good. Tensely he waited. Would it cross the plate? No. It would be inside. But instead of dropping to the dirt, Tim ducked his head and threw up his left shoulder. The ball glanced from his upper arm and struck the umpire's mask. He tossed his hat aside, chuckled at his brother's growling, "You lucky stiff!" and headed for first. He heard the coach's voice, "Atta boy."

Touching first, he danced warily off the bag. The base-line coach had signaled for a bunt. The batter made good, and Tim was advanced on the sacrifice. But like his brother, Tim was left at second, the next two men striking out.

Troy High held its lead until the fifth inning. Then, with Gardner's pitcher up first and Tim on deck, the coach demanded action.

And Gardner's pitcher stepped into the first ball. Ordinarily a weak batsman, he met this one squarely, and it rode in a high arc over the shortstop's head, between left and center. It looked like a sure two-bagger, and the local rooters came to their feet howling like a fleet of fire boats. But Troy's left fielder speared the fly with one hand, promptly changing the Gardner cheers to groans.

"Boy!" said Jack Marks as Tim took his place between the chalk lines, "that was too close for comfort."

The near hit seemed to have unnerved Troy's pitcher, for he passed Tim without a single strike. As the center fielder rounded first he glanced at the base-line coach. The signal read, "Steal on the first one."

Tim bit his lower lip. The coach, evidently, had decided to take this chance in the hope that it would further unnerve the Troy team. Or perhaps—yes, perhaps he was asking Tim the question he had asked before the game, "He isn't going to catch you, is he?"

Tim danced away from the bag, taking as long a lead as he dared, and once was driven back by a quick throw. The pitcher faced the batter, and with his first motion Tim was away. Shouts from the Gardner stands sped him down the path, which seemed miles long. The second baseman was straddling the base, crouched, set to take the throw which was coming like a shot from a gun. How foolish of the coach to think he could beat his brother's arm!

At that moment he stumbled, sprawling, his knees a few feet away from the white sack. A sob slipped from his throat. The coach would think he had done it on purpose. As the ball smacked against the baseman's glove Tim lunged headfirst toward him, without coming to his feet.





For a split second it was hard to distinguish what had happened, and then, as the ball rolled toward the shortstop, an hysterical shout arose from the Gardner stands. Tim climbed upon the base, rubbed dust from his eyes, and grinned. A few minutes later he scored the tying run on a single.

"Great stuff, Tim!" the coach exclaimed as he reached the bench. "Boy, you gave me heart failure, though. Forget what I said before the game, will you?"

For Gardner it was a genuine rally, and before the side was retired two more scores had crossed the plate. Even Tim was hoarse from shouting when at last he took the field again. His team was ahead, 3-1. Air-tight ball for the next four innings, and the game would be theirs. Suddenly he turned his head, as if remembering something. He saw his brother's tall form, shoulders sagging almost dejectedly, as he walked toward the visitors' bench. Victory for Gardner meant the crushing of his brother's hopes. In the excitement of run gathering he had forgotten that. His brother's last game. A championship eluding his grasp. And he, Tim, had been instrumental in starting the rally, by diving into the second baseman and knocking a perfect throw from his hand. Was he glad, or was he sorry? Tim yanked at his visor and sped toward center field, as if to escape the troublesome question.

Bolstered by a two-run lead, Gardner's pitcher hurled excellent ball in the sixth, seventh, and eighth innings. Not a Troy runner could get beyond second base. The visitors begged for "a hit, a hit," but their pleadings were

in vain. The team seemed to be stunned by this reversal of their fortunes, this imminent defeat at the hands of one of the league's weaker teams. True enough, they were holding Gardner in tight check, but this did not erase that ominous figure "3," on the score board.

Two men were down when Tim again came to bat in the last half of the eighth. As he approached the plate he glanced up quickly at his brother's face, begrimed and grotesque behind the bars of the mask. If there were only some way he could tell Jack he was sorry. Perhaps Jack read the thought in his eyes, for he thumped his fist into the mitt, and with forced levity said, "Well, Kid, think we're licked, don't you?"

Tim tapped the plate without answering.

"Well," his brother added, "we aren't. You watch our smoke next inning."

Tim grounded out to first. As the baseman touched the bag, Tim checked his stride. He half turned to tell Jack he was sorry, no matter what his coach might think.

But Jack Marks was waving his men in from the field. His voice was hard, but not discouraged. "Come on, you birds. Step on it. Let's go get 'em."

Tim abandoned his intent. He'd see Jack right after the game, instead.

It was Troy's last opportunity. The red and white banners flashed as the students came to their feet, desperately begging for a rally. Troy's coach walked toward the plate with his pitcher, patting him on the shoulder. Some declared he should have put in a pinch hitter, others

saw in the move a gesture of courageous defiance to the Gardner team. All debates were silenced, however, when a line drive shot directly into the second baseman's hands.

One down. Only two more to get, and no one on base. But Gardner's coach frowned. The head of Troy's batting list was up, and he knew that a ball game isn't won until it is over. Then, with a shout, he leaped upon the bench as Troy's lead-off man knocked an easy grounder to first.

Only by a last minute miracle could Troy now hope to win. The coach glanced toward the Gardner bleachers. Yes, already some of the fans were leaving. Always, when two are out in the last inning, a few spectators gather near the gates. To the coach, this seemed a promising omen.

Two down, and none on. A single raucous voice boomed from the Troy stands. "C'mon, Troy. Now let's win."

Hysterical laughter followed the remark, but as if in answer the next batter stepped fairly into the first pitched ball and drove it against the right field fence for a three-base hit. A moment later he scored as Gardner's shortstop fumbled a fast grounder.

Captain Jack Marks came to the plate, swinging two bats, with the needed tying run prancing around first base. The Troy rooters howled and cheered and whistled with mad abandon. On the bench, Gardner's coach scratched his head and then signaled his pitcher not to pass Jack. He judged that his boys might go to pieces completely if Marks were passed. Besides, if Marks hit anywhere in the infield, there was a chance for a force-out at second.

Out in center field Tim Marks reversed his cap visor, then hauled it back again, far over his eyes. He moved to the right, and again to the left. Hang it, would this game never end? Across the field his brother's bat appeared to be waving at him. He heard the right and left fielders calling in encouragement to the pitcher. His own voice came painfully—it sounded like a phonograph record, "Take your time, old man." And yet he hoped Jack would hit it.

The first ball was high, but so anxious was Captain Marks that he swung at it, lifting a foul that soared far behind the grandstand.

Up went the umpire's right arm. "Strike!"

The second ball was inside, and Jack stepped back. The umpire lifted his left arm. "Ball one."

The third pitch was low, and on the outside. Jack half swung, then dropped his bat, looking around at the umpire. The latter hesitated briefly, then raised his right arm. "Strike two."

Jack smote the plate angrily as he turned to face the pitcher. And out in center field Tim Marks found himself muttering, "Aw, you robber!"

Two down, two strikes and one ball. Would this agony never end?

Captain Marks rubbed perspiring hands on his soiled flannels, settled himself, and swung at the next pitched ball with all the strength of his broad shoulders.

The impact sounded like a rifle shot, and like a white bullet the ball sped in a high circle over second base. Tim had been playing far back, but his eye told him that

he could not hope to get under this powerful drive. It was destined for the center field bleachers, and a home run. Yet he turned and ran, ran as he had never run before. His muscles strained to reach the ball, although his heart was singing. This would put Troy ahead, by a single score. And it was his brother who had come through.

He tossed a glance upward, over his shoulder. The ball was descending rapidly, nearer than he had expected. But a few feet away loomed the gray of the waist-high bleacher fence. He couldn't make it—no one could expect him to catch it, not even the coach. Lucky it hadn't been an easy fly. Then he must either have hurt his brother cruelly, or have violated his team mates' trust.

Yet Tim was still running. He heard the right fielder's shout, "Look out. Can't make it." A swift glance, a sudden upward spring, the smack of the ball against his glove, and he crashed over the top of the fence. His head struck the edge of a lower seat and his body crumpled, with the left arm underneath.

Had Tim caught the ball? The stands across the field were silent, breathless. Jack Marks rounded second, third, and home, and then, without breaking stride, followed crowd and players who were streaming toward the empty center field bleachers. The Troy captain elbowed his way through the milling fans, while in his ears dinned conflicting shouts. "He caught it,"—"He dropped it."

He burst through the inner circle. The right fielder was kneeling above Tim, supporting his head with his arm, and wiping the dirt from his begrimed face. Tim's glove was clenched close to his breast.

Jack's voice broke as he saw blood trickling down the youngster's cheek. "Tim."

And Tim opened his eyes, lids flickering. He looked around dazedly, then recognized Jack. Full consciousness gleamed, and he opened his gloved palm. In it lay the ball. He looked at it and then at his brother.

"I'm sorry, Jack," he said huskily.

Captain Marks' hesitation was but momentary. He shook his shoulders, as if to throw off a burdensome weight.

"Sorry? Heck, Tim, I'm glad. Glad to have such a—you know what I mean, Tim,—such a ball player in the family."

## BE TRUE

*by Horatio Bonar*

Thou must be true thyself,  
If thou the truth wouldst teach;  
Thy soul must overflow, if thou  
Another's soul wouldst reach!  
It needs the overflow of heart  
To give the lips full speech.

Think truly, and thy thoughts  
Shall the world's famine feed;  
Speak truly, and each word of thine  
Shall be a fruitful seed;  
Live truly, and thy life shall be  
A great and noble creed.

## CASEY AT THE BAT

*Conceited, confident, superior Casey,  
the mighty hitter, comes to bat in  
the game's most exciting moment.*

*by Ernest L. Thayer*

It looked extremely rocky for the Mudville nine that day;  
The score stood two to four, with but an inning left to  
play.

So, when Cooney died at second, and Burrows did the  
same,

A pallor wreathed the features of the patrons of the game.

A straggling few got up to go, leaving there the rest,  
With that hope which springs eternal within the human  
breast,

For they thought, "if only Casey could get a whack at  
that,"

They'd put up even money now, with Casey at the bat.

But Flynn preceded Casey, and likewise so did Blake,  
And the former was a puddin', and the latter was a fake,  
So on that stricken multitude a deathlike silence sat,  
For there seemed but little chance of Casey's getting to  
the bat.

But Flynn let drive a "single," to the wonderment of all,  
And the much-despised Blakey "tore the cover off the  
ball."



And when the dust had lifted,  
and they saw what had  
occurred,

There was Blakey safe at sec-  
ond, and Flynn a-hug-  
ging third.

Then, from the gladdened  
multitude went up a joy-  
ous yell,

It rumbled in the mountain-  
tops; it rattled in the  
dell;

It struck upon the hillside  
and rebounded on the  
flat;

For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

There was ease in Casey's manner, as he stepped into his  
place;

There was pride in Casey's bearing, and a smile on Casey's  
face.

And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his  
hat,

No stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the  
bat.

Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with  
dirt,



Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on  
his shirt;  
Then while the New York pitcher ground the ball into his  
hip,  
Defiance gleamed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.

And now the leather-covered sphere came hurling through  
the air,  
And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.  
Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped—  
"That ain't my style," said Casey. "Strike one," the  
umpire said.

From the benches, black with people, there went up a  
muffled roar,  
Like the beating of storm waves on a stern and distant  
shore.  
"Kill him! Kill the umpire!" shouted someone on the  
stand,  
And it's likely they'd have killed him had not Casey raised  
a hand.

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage  
shone;  
He stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;  
He signaled to Sir Timothy, once more the spheroid flew;  
But Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said, "Strike  
two."

"Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands, and echo answered "Fraud!"

But one scornful look from Casey and the audience was awed.

They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,

And they knew that Casey wouldn't let that ball go by again.

The sneer is gone from Casey's lip, his teeth are clenched in hate;

He pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate.

And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go,

And now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow.

Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright;

The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light.

And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout;

But there is no joy in Mudville—mighty Casey has struck out.



### TO THE SKY ON SKIS \*

*How four men climbed to the top of  
the highest mountain in North America.*

*by Lowell Thomas*

On the parade ground at Oslo a smart, tall, blue-eyed young Norwegian officer was drilling his company. The soldiers who marched back and forth were the pick of Norway's army, the King's Guard. The young officer commanding, although one of the most intelligent in the regiment, had from childhood suffered from an affliction: he stammered. In moments of excitement he all but lost the power of speech. And that's why he became an ex-

\* By permission of the author.

plorer. That's why he performed one of the mightiest feats in the history of mountaineering.

But to return to Norway. On that particular morning the drill went off much as usual. Then suddenly, at one end of the parade ground, behind a wall, the young officer saw a group of visitors—the King, accompanied by members of the royal court.

In front of his King, Erling Strom had a right to be nervous. And he was. The Guard was marching toward the royal spectators, toward that wall. Nearer and nearer they marched. No command to "Right turn!" Closer they marched, but not a syllable emerged from the officer's lips. Finally they ran right into the wall and stopped, helplessly marking time and looking excessively foolish—the King's Guard, the King, and particularly the young officer, who had become involved in a fit of stammering at the worst possible moment.

Naturally, that ended our hero's career in the Norwegian army! That's why young Erling Strom, like his viking forefathers, sailed for America, and there he turned to the thing he most loved to do—skiing.

One day, on the deck of a little boat dancing over the waves of Cook Inlet, Alaska, the storm clouds lifted, and he beheld a sight that filled him with wonder, and a great ambition. From the low Alaskan plain the majestic snow-clad mass of Mount McKinley towered 20,300 feet into the sky. Erling Strom's first thought was: What a ski run! Twenty thousand feet high—and downhill in every direction! Then he heard that McKinley was not only the highest peak in North America but that climbing it was

one of the world's major feats of mountain climbing. One well known mountain climber alone had made three unsuccessful attempts to reach the top, on snowshoes.

"Snowshoes, eh?" said Strom. "Suppose one could show the world how much more easily it can be done on skis?"

Such a feat cannot be achieved alone. In addition to equipment, wise organization, and careful preparation, it called for money, of which Erling Strom had almost none. So he must find somebody who could finance it. He finally aroused the enthusiasm of Alfred Lindley, a well-to-do sportsman of Minneapolis who was a crack skier and had a definite talent for organization.

It was a small party of four men that started from the McKinley Park Station in April, 1932. With Lindley and Strom were Harry Liek, superintendent of McKinley National Park, and Grant Pearson, a ranger. Horace Albright, then Director of National Parks, gave them the use of the dog teams belonging to McKinley Park to pull their duffel and supplies to their main base camp.

They had 1,200 pounds of supplies, a fair indication of the great size of the undertaking. These supplies consisted mostly of food. In addition, there were sleeping bags, stoves, gasoline for the stoves, ropes, ice axes, eight pairs of skis, two pairs of snowshoes, windbreakers, parkas, Lapland shoes, and crampons—irons to be attached to their shoes for climbing over ice. Also they carried two small special tents designed for such an Alaskan venture.

Besides all this, the Lindley-Strom expedition started out with 800 pounds of equipment that they were carrying

for somebody else. Allen Carpé was leading a party to investigate cosmic rays from Mount McKinley. In order to save a hundred-mile trek to the mountain, followed by ten days of tortuous climbing, the scientists planned to fly from Fairbanks. And Strom and Lindley generously agreed to carry their 800 pounds of scientific instruments to the head of the great glacier.

Strom soon proved his point that skis were well suited for such an adventure. Conditions were almost ideal, and he with his companions made the first hundred miles pleasantly, easily, and speedily. Through sparsely timbered valleys and low foothill passes they skied and sledged until they reached an elevation of 2,000 feet above timber line. There they found themselves in a world of white frozen silence.

Everything hitherto had merely been strenuous fun. But at their base camp at Cache Creek they had to prepare themselves for the real, hard work. First of all, supplies had to be toted up McGonnigan Pass to the Muldrow Glacier. The grade was so steep that sled-loads had to be lightened, as well as the packs carried by the men. They had to make several trips of it. Already they began to feel the cold at night, for under the top layer of snow was ice hundreds of feet thick.

After leaving this camp, difficulties grew progressively. The glacier was pitted with crevasses. A plunge into any one of them would be fatal. So the path to be followed had to be carefully scouted in advance. Every morning Strom, Lindley, and Pearson set forth on their skis, lashed together

with a 120-foot rope. Whenever one of them set foot on a deceptive snow bridge across a crevasse and fell in, the others could haul him out. The crevasses grew narrow at the edge of the glacier, but this forced the climbers close to towering mountain walls from which other overhanging glaciers constantly hurled down huge masses of ice.

For ten days the Lindley-Strom expedition had this job to do—ten days to mush to the head of Muldrow Glacier. But after those ten days they were 11,000 feet up. This was as far as the dog teams could go.

As they waved good-by to the dog drivers and their teams it seemed to the four explorers that now they were losing all connection with the world. On three sides white walls of ice hemmed them in. Their way was up.

There were no neighbors' radios to disturb them the night they slept at the head of the Muldrow, but every hour came a rumble as of thunder, then a roar and a crash, as ice avalanches rolled down the mountain, falling close to the place where the climbers were camping.

And cold? Judge for yourself. At night Strom wore a fur parka. Under it he had on three sweaters, woolen shirt and pants over three suits of underwear, plus three pairs of socks. So wrapped up, he tucked himself into his fur-lined sleeping bag, buttoned tight all around.

The next objective was Karsten's Ridge, so named after Harry Karsten, who had been with the late Archdeacon Stuck, of the Yukon, on the only previous successful attempt to climb Mount McKinley. The ridge is 500 feet above the place where Lindley and Strom camped at the

head of Muldrow Glacier. This again required many trips up and down, toting supplies and equipment. And here again the advantage of skis became obvious. The atmosphere at that height became rarefied, breathing difficult. Whether on skis or snowshoes, it takes half an hour to climb those 500 feet. But going down a man needs only two minutes on skis, on snowshoes fifteen minutes. Pearson and Liek tried it once on snowshoes as an experiment. Once was enough. And says Strom, "We were thankful that we did not have to carry Carpé's instruments any further."

A thousand feet above the head of the Muldrow Glacier they made their fifth camp site. Here Karsten's Ridge flattens out, affording a level space. But they found it so wind-blown and hard-packed that even skis did not avail them and they had to cut steps as they went. Three more days for that part of the climb. And then a stinging blizzard that held them tent-bound for twenty-four hours.

The next stage was a 3,000-foot climb to Harper's Glacier. Midway they came upon an interesting record. Archdeacon Stuck claimed that the lowest winter temperatures on earth were to be found on Mount McKinley. So in 1913 he had cached a minimum thermometer near a large boulder on a rocky slope called Parker's Pass. It was an exciting moment for the Lindley-Strom expedition when its four men recognized that boulder. It was still more exciting when they found a wooden box, carefully hidden, between a couple of rocks but exposed to the prevailing winds so that it might not be covered by drifting snows.



Solemnly, almost ceremoniously, Strom and Lindley opened that box. Under the lid lay a minimum registering thermometer. It was marked to register temperatures down to  $95^{\circ}$  below zero. But the float had not stopped at  $95^{\circ}$ . The cold had driven it clean down to the bottom of the bulb, indicating much lower temperatures than  $95^{\circ}$  below!

At 16,000 feet the climbers had to abandon their skis and fix the crampons to their shoes. Hard-packed snow made any other kind of going impossible. And now the altitude began to get them in earnest. It was difficult not only to go ahead but even to rest. Just turning over in his sleeping bag made a man pant and gasp.

Their seventh and final camp they pitched on the saddle between the twin peaks of McKinley, altitude 17,000. Here the exertion of preparing and eating breakfast was



so great that they could not start climbing until nine o'clock. They got off under a sky of the deepest blue, with not a breath of wind stirring, temperature  $26^{\circ}$  below. There remained only a distance of some 3,000 feet to go, not much more than half a mile. But what a half mile! No technical difficulties to be overcome, no overhanging precipices. But without oxygen to breathe the going was slow.

First they tried climbing forty steps and stopping for a rest. That was too much, since they had to cut every step for footholds. Eventually they had to slow down to twenty-five steps; then, on the last thousand feet, two steps and then rest. Only by sheer will power could they drag one foot after the other. The final hundred yards took them a whole hour.

But by five o'clock they had made it. There they stood, literally on the top of North America, 20,000 feet above sea level! Breathless and exhausted as they were, they had strength enough left to feel the thrill that only mountaineers can know. To the west the sun was sinking behind Mount Foraker. Below them was a wilderness of blinding white frozen peaks.

But they couldn't afford to stay and enjoy it long. After a few unsuccessful efforts to take photographs—during which Strom froze five fingers—down they started. Three hundred feet below the peak, Lindley, Strom, and Liek stopped to cache a metal tube containing the record of their exploit. Pearson went on ahead.

As his three companions proceeded they could see nothing of Pearson. They began to fear for him. Had he slipped and fallen over a precipice? Suddenly Strom

espied a tiny speck some 1,200 feet below. It moved, then stood up and made motions. The three climbed down and read the story of what had happened in Pearson's tracks. Below the rocks he had slipped on glare ice and slid down the mountainside. When Lindley, Strom, and Liek caught up with him, he was a wreck—one eye shut, one ear torn, blood all over his face, every bone aching.

They climbed the North Peak on the following day. Although not as high as the South Peak by 300 feet, the climb was a feather in their caps, for nobody else had ever set foot on the top of the North Peak. There they succeeded in making not only good still pictures but also movies.

The descent began uneventfully and swiftly. But they found themselves out of luck when they reached Karsten's Ridge. They had counted upon using the five thousand steps they had cut there in the ice. To their dismay, the wind had blown them solid with snow. Every single step had to be dug out on that knife-edge.

Twenty-one hours after they started down they came to Allen Carpé's camp, which had been pitched since they had passed that way going up. They shouted. No answer. They looked around. Nobody in sight. Snow covered everything. All around was deep silence, broken only by a ticking sound. It came from a little instrument that was counting cosmic rays.

Then they found Carpé's diary, which told a fateful tale. Carpé and his companion, Theodore Koven, had been waiting for three other members of his party. They were long overdue. The abandoned camp, all the circumstances, indicated a tragedy. Tracks on the glacier bore more

dreadful evidence. Snow had fallen since the Lindley-Strom party had climbed up. Carpe and Koven had tried to follow the Lindley-Strom trail, but had missed it. A mile and a half farther down was a dark object 200 yards off the trail. It was Koven's body, dead of exposure.

For nine hours Strom, Lindley, Liek, and Pearson struggled down the glacier, picking up the almost obliterated trail they had made on their way up, the only way to avoid falling into any one of a hundred crevasses. Reaching McGonnigan Pass, they came upon a tent with two of the other members of Carpe's party. One of them was writhing with appendicitis. A fifth man had gone to get help, but failed to find a telephone. When Lindley and Strom got to Fairbanks, they sent a rescue plane.

By the time Lindley, Strom, Liek, and Pearson regained base camp, the Norwegian had amply proved his claim for the superiority of skis over snowshoes for mountain climbing. Previous descents had taken seven days—seven camps. The Lindley-Strom party made it in forty-one hours elapsed time. And they had formed the only expedition to climb both peaks of Mount McKinley.

Erling Strom now divides his years into four parts. Every winter he is the maestro of skiing. With spring he goes to his own camp high up on Mount Assiniboine. In summer he goes home to Norway. And in the fall he tells the story of his explorations on the lecture platform. The last time I saw him there was a restless, ambitious look in his eyes. He was thinking of new worlds to conquer on skis.

## LAUGHTER \*

*Everyone knows Jimmy Durante. We laugh at him and with him,—on stage and screen.*

*by Jimmy Durante*

I've met all kinds of people. You do in my line. From the best to the worst. And I want to say this: Laughter is their best safety valve. Once they're laughing they become likable, agreeable, and human. Whether it's the stuffed shirt pompously explaining the state of the nation, or the gangster about to rub out two other fellows—they're equal and alike when they laugh.

When I was a kid down on<sup>1</sup> the New York East Side<sup>1</sup>, the neighborhood was full of tough guys, and they could make it pretty rough for a youngster like me whose schnozzle<sup>1</sup> could be seen two blocks away.<sup>11</sup> I spent many unhappy days ducking them, but they usually caught up with me—and I was biffed around plenty.<sup>1</sup> I used to look at myself in the mirror and almost bust out crying—no kidding.

But my mother loved me and, above all, she wanted her Jimmy to look elegant. So one day she bought me a Buster Brown suit with a large flowing collar, and that Sunday she made me wear it. I was a little self-conscious about my new outfit and I slunk along the street, hugging the walls. If the gang saw me, I knew I was sunk.

Suddenly I caught sight of myself in a store window.

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At first I was a little awed, but, as I gazed at that apparition in the glass, I found myself smiling, and soon I was laughing.

As I was standing there, along came four or five of the gang. They stared at me, trying to figure out why I wasn't running.

"Listen, you," one of them said, "what's so funny?"

"Look," and I pointed to the figure in the window. "A guy dressed like a sissy, with a face like a horse." And I kept right on laughing, and they thought it was funny, too, and presently were laughing right along with me.

One of the boys was all for messing me up; but the leader of the gang said, "Lay off him. He's a good guy."

It dawned on me then and there that as long as I could laugh, I was safe from the world. And I have learned since that laughter keeps me safe from myself, too. A Schnozzle has no place in a Greek tragedy. The audience would roar with laughter when the Furies descended upon him. And I laugh, too, at the idea of my appearing in a sad role, even in an earthquake.

All of us have schnozzles, if not on our faces, then in our characters, minds, or habits. We are, in short, ridiculous in one way or another. When we recognize our schnozzles, instead of defending them, we begin to laugh, and the world laughs with us. Life isn't serious any more, and death is pretty much of a grin. What a great world it would be if we all learned to laugh at our schnozzles. We wouldn't have wars, suicides, race hatreds, or economic distress, and sickness of soul and body would be rare indeed.



## LADY CLARE

by Alfred Tennyson

It was the time when lilies blow,  
And clouds are highest up in air,  
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe  
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn;  
Lovers long-betroth'd were they;  
They two will wed the morrow morn—  
God's blessing on the day!

"He does not love me for my birth,  
Nor for my lands so broad and fair;

He loves me for my own true worth,  
And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,  
Said, "Who was this that went from thee?"  
"It was my cousin," said Lady Clare;  
"To-morrow he weds with me."

"O, God be thank'd," said Alice the nurse,  
"That all comes round so just and fair!"  
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,  
And you are *not* the Lady Clare."

"Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse,"  
Said Lady Clare, "that ye speak so wild?"  
"As God's above," said Alice the nurse,  
"I speak the truth: you are my child."

"The old earl's daughter died at my breast:  
I speak the truth, as I live by bread!  
I buried her like my own sweet child,  
And put my child in her stead."

"Falsely, falsely have ye done,  
O mother," she said, "if this be true,  
To keep the best man under the sun  
So many years from his due."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,  
"But keep the secret for your life,  
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's  
When you are man and wife."



“If I’m a beggar born,” she said,  
“I will speak out, for I dare not lie.  
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,  
And fling the diamond necklace by.”

“Nay now, my child,” said Alice the nurse,  
“But keep the secret all ye can.”  
She said, “Not so; but I will know  
If there be any faith in man.”

“Nay now, what faith?” said Alice the nurse;  
“The man will cleave unto his right.”  
“And he shall have it,” the lady replied,  
“Tho’ I should die to-night.”

“Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!  
Alas, my child, I sinn’d for thee!”  
“O mother, mother, mother,” she said,  
“So strange it seems to me.

“Yet here’s a kiss for my mother dear,  
My mother dear, if this be so,  
And lay your hand upon my head,  
And bless me, mother, ere I go.”

She clad herself in a russet gown,  
She was no longer Lady Clare;  
She went by dale, and she went by down,  
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought  
Leapt up from where she lay,

Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,  
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower:  
"O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!  
Why come you drest like a village maid,  
That are the flower of the earth?"

"If I come drest like a village maid,  
I am but as my fortunes are;  
I am a beggar born," she said,  
"And not the Lady Clare."

"Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,  
"For I am yours in word and in deed.  
Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,  
"Your riddle is hard to read."

O, and proudly stood she up!  
Her heart within her did not fail:  
She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,  
And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn;  
He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood;  
"If you are not the heiress born,  
And I," said he, "the next in blood,——

"If you are not the heiress born,  
And I," said he, "the lawful heir,  
We two will wed to-morrow morn,  
And you shall still be Lady Clare."



### ONE HORSE \*

*Wherein a white boy matches  
wits with an Indian chief.*

*by Herbert E. Smith*

When covered wagon trains rolled across the unbroken plains of the West, boys were often called upon to play men's parts. Indians contested every foot of the way with the hardy pioneers who blazed the westward trail of American Empire. In the hundreds of battles and skirmishes with the savages, boys in many instances fought beside their elders. Such a boy was Elias Cook, fifteen-year-old son of the leader of a little band of emigrant settlers, whose wagon train was fired upon by Indians

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in a clearing near the present city of Butte, Montana.

As the Indians circled in preparation for a mass attack, the whites formed the usual defensive ring of prairie schooners. Horses were quickly led inside, and the men, women and children crouched behind the wagons.

A dry stream bed marked the position taken up by the defenders, while the Indians held the advantage of higher ground on the hillsides. Ammunition for both whites and redskins was low, and as neither side wasted shots, it soon became apparent that victory would come to the side which out-smarted the other. Fortunately for them, the settlers were well supplied with provisions, clothes, adequate cover, and horses. The Indians possessed only a poor lot of broken-down ponies. However they had one big factor in their favor. On their knoll was a spring of running water. The settlers' stream bed was dry. Canteens had been drained hours before. Without more water soon, the plight of the whites would be serious indeed.

Through the afternoon and night and well into the next forenoon the siege continued, both parties carrying on a desultory fire, with neither gaining any advantage. By noon the pioneers, tortured by thirst, decided to send a messenger to confer with the Indians. But whom?

"Send me!" begged young Elias Cook.

A conference was held and, the boy's father consenting, it was decided to send Elias out under a flag of truce. Some of the older men of the wagon train attempted to tell Elias what to say when he should reach the Indian position, but Elias' father checked them.

"No living man can tell the boy what to say or do," he declared. "Only God can direct him now."

The boy's mother, of stern stuff as were all the pioneer women of those days, had but one objection. "Remember, Silas," she said, "he is our first born. Won't the Indians think we are cowards, sending a young boy out to treat with them? And"—fearfully—"if anything should happen to him——!"

"Wife," replied the stern leader, "there are no cowards in our family, or in our company here today. The boy is our last hope. Elias wants to go. He must go! It would be worse than cowardice for me to select another messenger. The savages can only respect his bravery. Son!"

"Yes, Father, I am ready," was the firm response, and clasping his mother in one fond, parting embrace, Elias stole out under the wagons and, lifting his white flag, started across the open ground.

The Indians held their fire as the lad slowly approached them. At the edge of the slope a sharp command in guttural broken English halted him.

"What you want, boy?"

Wise beyond his years, Elias said: "What *you* want?"

The Indian who had challenged withdrew for a brief council with his chief. He beckoned the boy to come near the painted group, and held up ten fingers.

"Horses, boy! Ten!"

Ten horses! Elias' heart sank. Why, ten horses was half the number his people had. To lose that many would mean they could not go on!

Carefully giving no sign of anxiety, Elias shook his head. Seating himself on the ground, he held up one finger.

"One horse!" he declared firmly.

Now the Indian chief strode forward. He suspected the settlers' desperate need of water. Scooping up a hatful of the precious fluid he extended it with a friendly gesture to the white boy.

The impulse to seize and dash that water down his parched throat was almost unconquerable, but young Elias thrust the hat away. "No need drink," he declared.

The Indians were plainly surprised. They were further taken aback when Elias rose as if to depart.

"Wait, boy!" commanded the English-speaking brave. He turned and jabbered away to the chief, then held up five fingers before Elias.

"Catchem five horses, all right, boy!"

Elias smiled scornfully. He knew that he had gained an opening victory in persuading the redskins to cut their demand in half. Determined to stick to his guns, he shook his head again, and held up one finger.

The crafty chief now caused another brimming hatful of water to be held to Elias' dry lips. This was an acid test, and Elias knew it. Much as he craved the cool water, he somehow managed not to falter. He raised his hand and carelessly brushed the hat aside, as if it annoyed him.

Again he started to walk away, and once more the Indians halted him. A long, lively conference followed. Obviously the red men disagreed as to what should be done, and Elias waited nervously for their decision.

At length the English-speaking savage turned to Elias and said, "All right, boy! You catchem one horse, bringum here. Then white people go in peace."

His heart bounding happily, Elias nodded. But then a sudden thought crossed his active brain.

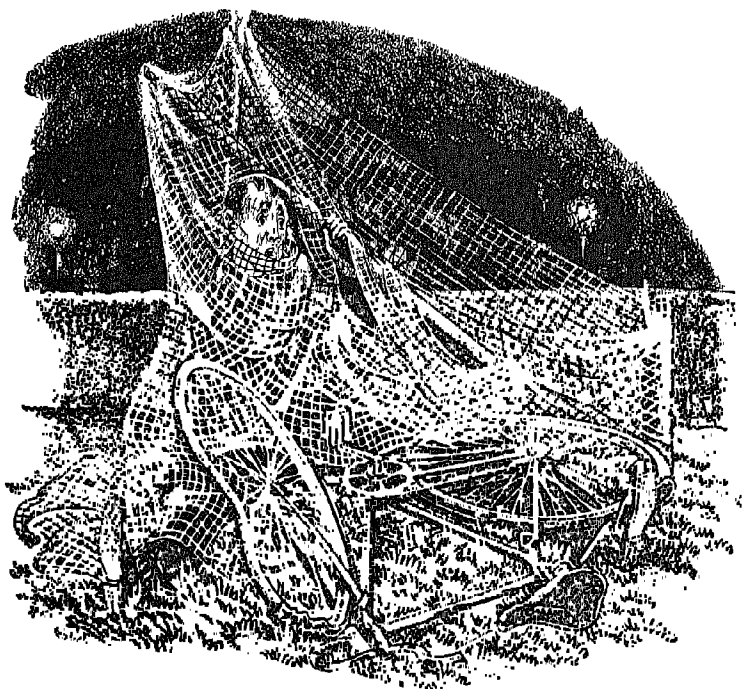
"Me bring horse—there!" He pointed to a knoll upwind and about a hundred yards away. The Indian chief at first suspected some trick, but he finally agreed and Elias sped back to the barricaded wagon train.

Joyfully the settlers accepted the almost unbelievable bargain,—one horse for a chance to get water and to escape from their grave peril.

Elias walked back across the open space, leading the horse to the selected meeting place, where watchful braves took possession of it. Then mounting their ponies, and with the chief seated majestically on the white men's horse, the savages soon disappeared over a distant ridge.

Almost before their enemies were out of sight the settlers hastened to slake their burning thirst at the cold spring. Loud were their praises for young Elias Cook.

The boy's father was especially proud. "Don't forget," he reminded the company around the campfire that night, "that Elias showed rare judgment not only in bargaining with the savages, but also in fixing a place far from water to bring the horse. Human beings may be able to conceal their thirst, but animals can't! The horse would have gone directly to the spring, and the Indians would have discovered how Elias had outwitted them if he had brought the horse to the meeting place by the water!"



### A NIGHT IN ANNAPOLIS \*

*The Four Class Hop was to  
be held that night—and Mid-  
shipman Lee did want to go!*

*by Robb White, III*

Midshipman Lee, plebe, stood at attention at dress parade, wriggling his toes inside his broiling shoes to keep his feet awake and tipping a little to the right to obtain support from his Springfield rifle. Occasionally with an almost imperceptible movement he pulled his neck out of the hot, stiff embrace of his full-dress jacket and delighted at the feel of a whisper of wind cooling the end of one finger which stuck out through a hole in his white glove.

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Ahead of and around Lee were a couple of thousand other midshipmen doing practically the same things he was. Only the midshipmen officers didn't wriggle their toes, and since they carried swords they couldn't lean on rifles; but that was the way they got to be midshipmen officers. Directly behind him Lee knew that Charley Fenton, first class, and non-ratey 2 P.O.—whose stiff collar had been worn for four years without change—was probably resting as well as he could in his oldest shoes, broken out at the toes and quite comfortable. Since Charley was also a filecloser he didn't carry a rifle and he was probably standing "at ease" and enjoying the gallery of some thousands of girls who looked quite lovely. Lee didn't care much about what Charley was doing either—after all R.H.I.P.—Rank Hath Its Privileges—and Lee knew that by the time he got to be a first classman he'd probably bring a folding cot and some hard biscuits to all parades.

Fenton was for some reason terribly interested in Lee. When a beetle started having its private parade on Lee's neck and Lee leaned a fraction of an inch to scratch it on the tip of his bayonet Fenton growled quietly, but with a definite threat. Magruder, at the front of the platoon, heard the growling and sent out one of his radio waves to keep quiet. Charley resented that and muttered around behind the ranks while Lee stopped scratching his neck with the bayonet and stood still.

In front of the regiment the five-striper and some of the high ranking midshipmen officers, known to the regiment as "penines," were going through their endless and myste-

rious businesses while the regiment stood in the blazing sun at attention for hours. No one could hear the speech going on, so there was a good deal of boredom.

Lee whiled away the monotonous time by gloating silently over the prospect of the coming afternoon and night. Liberty started after lunch; he and Leo and Bill Hale and Jonesy had a star boat—an accomplishment in itself—and that night was the first Four Class Hop, meaning that it was the first time in twelve months plebes would be allowed to go to a dance. The prospect of all that seemed good to Lee. There was a nice on-shore breeze which looked as though it would hold; they already had some provisions for the voyage and Jonesy had borrowed an upperclassman's victrola for the afternoon. Then there was that girl Magruder had down for the hop; Lee wondered if he couldn't dispose of Magruder. Pleasant, he thought. Life was good even in the broiling sun.

In the second platoon there was a slight commotion and soon two first classmen, supporting a plebe between them, walked off to the waiting ambulance. Every parade netted a dozen or so pass-outs. Lee watched them with envy.

Then he heard Fenton and Urquart whispering behind him. They, too, had seen the pass-out and noted with equal envy the lucky first classmen who got out of the parade by dragging off the plebe.

Suddenly Fenton said, whispering, "Mister Lee."

"Yes, sir?"

"How do you feel?"

"Fine, sir."

"No, you don't," Charley told him. "You feel awful, Mister Lee. As a matter of fact, in about half a minute you're going to feel so awful you're going to faint and fall right over backwards and Mister Urquart and I are going to catch you in our nice strong arms and take you over to the ambulance and bring you to again. Understand?"

Lee understood very well, and with some pleasure. He thought of the pleasure of missing another hour and a half of parade and thought it very kind of Fenton and Urquart to notice how ill and faint he was. "I feel awful now," he whispered back.

"O.K.," Charley whispered.

Lee held his rifle clear of his side so he wouldn't stab himself with the bayonet. Then, bracing himself, for it took a little courage simply to fall backwards into space, he started falling.

He fell and fell. The more he fell the more he wondered when his cohorts, Fenton and Urquart, were going to catch him. After all, Lee said to himself, when he was well past mid-air, it was about time something was done about him. He thought, during each swift inch of his progress that, it being a gentlemen's agreement, Fenton and Urquart, alert men that they were, should bring their nice strong arms into play and do the right thing by him. It hardly seemed possible, Lee mused, as he hurtled down through the air, that they could overlook the very evident falling body of an entire midshipman. But they did. Lee hit the hard ground with a terrible wallop, knocking the wind out of him

in a short whistling sound. Then his rifle bounced upon his chest and lay there.

Plebes, of course, have no opinions, no feelings, no brains and above all no anger or disapproval of what their superiors do. But Lee, recovering from his contact with the parade ground, forgot all that and looked up at Fenton with an expressive look and started to tell him that the entire arrangement had been poorly conducted.

But it wasn't Fenton whose legs Lee saw. It was Challenger. Lieutenant A. L. Challenger, the terror of the navy—a quiet, dangerous man with a dangerous mind. Lee started to salute but found that his cap was off, so he stopped saluting and lay flat on the ground trying to think just what he ought to do in such a situation. Fenton and Urquart, standing stiffly at attention, were not even aware of the existence of a Midshipman Lee.



"Fall down?" said Challenger quietly, but severely.

"Yes, sir," Midshipman Lee replied politely.

"Must have stumbled over something?"

"No, sir."

"Feel weak, Mister Lee?"

"Very, sir."

"Spots before the eyes?"

"Yes, sir. Black ones," Lee said, looking at Fenton and Urquart who acted as though they were somewhere else.

"Condition serious," Challenger decided. "Fenton, Urquart, help this man to the ambulance. Lee, you go to sick bay (the infirmary) and stay there until reveille in the morning." Lieutenant Challenger walked away, keeping behind the ranks, a position he had found advantageous.

With quiet satisfaction Fenton and Urquart helped Lee to his feet and started to the ambulance that waited on the edge of the field. Lee put his arms around their shoulders and let his entire weight drag.

"Hey," Fenton growled, "pick up your feet. What do you think this is, a free ride?"

Lee continued to let his legs drag in the dust and hung more heavily on the two staggering men.

Suddenly Fenton stopped and flung Lee's arm off his shoulder. Urquart did too. "Come on," Fenton growled, "there's nothing wrong with you."

At this Lee let his knees collapse and lay down on the ground. The two first classmen stood over him, glaring. Then they noticed Lieutenant Challenger watching them. Muttering, they picked Lee up and started off again. Lee

continued to hang his entire weight on the two men and by the time they reached the ambulance both of them were exhausted. They went off and sat down behind a tree, out of sight of Challenger, and threatened Lee's life.

Lee sat down on the rear step of the ambulance, and leaned his rifle against it. The driver of the ambulance came around and looked at him. Inside, the other plebe was resting on a swinging stretcher.

"What's the matter, middle?" asked the driver.

"Nothing. Let's go to sick bay."

"This isn't a taxi," the driver told him. "Walk to sick bay if nothing's wrong with you."

"It's too nice a day to walk," Lee said. "Let's ride." He smiled. "I've got orders to *ride* to sick bay. Isn't this an ambulance?"

The driver muttered something, but Lee ignored him, crawling up into the stretcher beside the plebe. As the ambulance started off the plebe said, "Pretty soft, eh?"

Lee looked at him slowly. "What's pretty soft?" he wanted to know.

"This—" the plebe waved his hand expressively. "Riding the two miles back to sick bay instead of hoofing it."

Lee didn't answer as he opened the cabinet and got out all the stiffly-creased white pillows and put them under his head. Then he crossed his legs and lay on his back staring at the swaying roof of the machine.

"This suits me," the plebe went on merrily. "Of course, I didn't feel so hot for a minute, but it's all gone now. How do you feel?"

Lee turned his head and looked at him with utter scorn. "Dandy—just dandy," he said, bitterly. For the rest of the trip to Bancroft Hall the plebe babbled away while Lee lay in silence thinking of that star boat he would *not* be sailing, of the hop he would *not* attend, of Magruder's girl whom he would *not* see.

Sick bay was deserted except for a classmate of Lee's named Cy Brewer who was looking at the visitors down on the road with a telescope. He turned when Lee came in. "What're you in for?" he asked.

"Fenton and Urquart," Lee answered, savagely.

"A dread disease," Brewer said. "What happened?"

Lee told him in short, biting sentences. Then he asked what was Brewer's trouble.

"Well, I didn't relish the idea of the parade," Brewer answered, "so I decided I'd gold-brick out of it. I filled the basin with hot water just before sick call this morning and held my foot in it until the whole thing got to be a lovely glowing red—terrible affliction I had—then I hustled up to sick call. And do you know what happened?"

"No," Lee said. "Why should I?"

"Well, there were so many others up there trying to gold-brick too that by the time I got to the medical officer all the red had gone and I was in a pickle."

"So you did what," Lee asked.

"I couldn't think of anything except sacroiliac—I knew they couldn't give me medicine for that, so I related him all the symptoms and here I am."

"And here you'll stay," Lee informed him.

"Yes. It's worse than that even. They're sending me to the hospital tomorrow and I'll probably be there until the cruise—miss all of June Week."

"Yeah. The navy's going to the dogs," Lee decided. "They don't have consideration for a man any more."

For the rest of that day the two plebes took turns looking through the telescope at the fine free people moving about outside—Lee saw his star boat tacking beautifully in the bay—or else they remodeled the Naval Academy, making it a plebe's paradise and at the same time somewhat useless.

Then, after lights-out at nine they squatted on a bed with the telescope and took turns looking at the hop in progress in the Armory.

The hop ended at eleven; at eleven-thirty people started running back through the Yard to check in. That went on until twelve, then all the lights in the building went out.

"Now, let's see who's going over the wall," Lee announced, taking the telescope and training it on the lower windows of the Fourth Battalion wing.

"I heard there's going to be an inspection of rooms tonight," Cy said. "Probably nobody'll go over."

By a process of mathematics Lee found the room occupied by Fenton and Urquart. The moon had risen over the oyster fleet in the bay and was brilliant. The Yard was as bright as at twilight and Lee could see every detail of a sailor's uniform as he walked toward the *Reina Mercedes*. And in Fenton's room he saw a man moving about in the light of the moon.



To Lee, that restlessness of Fenton's meant one very clear thing. He handed Cy the telescope, put on his white, ill-fitting sick bay pajama jacket and started to leave the room, moving quietly so the orderly wouldn't hear him.

"Where you going?" Brewer whispered.

"Got a little business to attend to in the Yard," Lee answered.

Brewer slipped on his jacket and followed.

Tiptoeing down the long empty corridors, staying close to the wall, they made their way to the circular staircase, into the dimly lit basement and finally out by the laundry. Hiding behind a bush near the Armory they made sure the coast was clear. No Jimmy-Legs—Yard policemen—were in sight. They dashed across the road. Fumbling around behind the lacrosse practice boards they finally emerged at the gun sheds and again looked for Jimmy-Legs. Seeing none they ran down the sea wall to the other side of the stadium. There they climbed up into the girders.

On the other side of the stadium was the high, barbed-wire-guarded wall which separated the academy from the town of Annapolis. Midshipmen going A.W.O.L. (absent without leave) had to get past this wall, and past the Jimmy-Legs who patrolled it, before they were free. At



the end toward the sea the wall bent at right angles. Lee and Brewer crouched on a girder near a short abutment.

The night went on undisturbed. Moonlight illuminated the football field. Lee and Brewer, two white, floppy ghosts in their sick bay pajamas, squatted on the girder, waiting. The Yard clock bonged two bells, and still they waited.

Then, just as Lee was beginning to think that they were too late, a shadow near the laundry moved, skirting the Fourth's wing. It hesitated a long time, then ran along the same route they had taken. For a long time they saw no more until it appeared again near the gun sheds. At the same time a Jimmy-Legs came out of his little house near the gate, got silently on his bicycle and started wheeling off toward *Reina*. Lee and Brewer waited.

Then the shadow came running down the sea wall toward them. In the moonlight Lee could see Fenton's anxious face. He was dressed in a blue drill shirt and black trousers—the unvarying uniform midshipmen use when “frenching out.” The two plebes sat motionless as the man came on. They hardly breathed as he stopped at the short section of wall and looked around again. Then bracing himself he jumped up and caught the top of the wall and swung out, holding by his hands, so that his body hung over the water which lapped gently against the concrete. Securely out of sight he began inching his way along, hand over hand, and soon they could hear him breathing heavily with the effort.

Lee climbed silently through the girders to the wall. Crouching, he sucked in his breath—everything was quiet, moonlit, serene. Below, unconscious of him, Fenton was edging his way along. Suddenly Lee grabbed both of Fenton's wrists, and shouted, "Name? Rank? Company?"

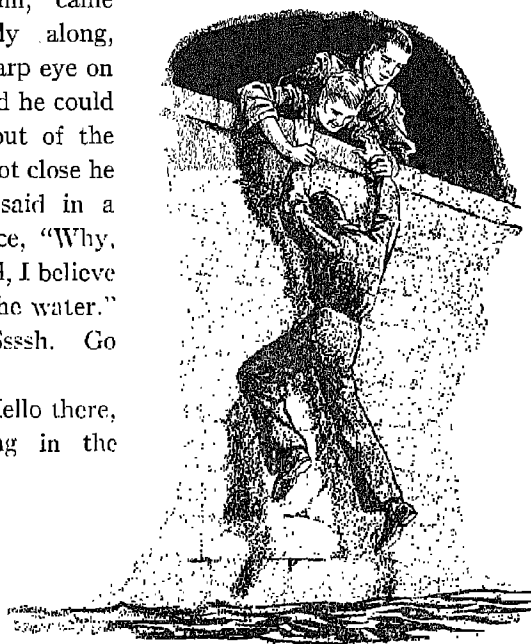
Fenton gasped and dropped. Lee heard his fingers scraping against the smooth concrete; then a tremendous splash as he struck the water.

Lee sat on his heels without even smiling and waited while Brewer stuffed yards of his pajamas into his mouth to keep from laughing out loud. It was quiet as a grave below them.

Without a sound Lee climbed out of the girders, ran twenty or so yards down the sea wall and then, with Brewer beside him, came strolling innocently along, but with a very sharp eye on Fenton, whose head he could just see sticking out of the water. When he got close he leaned over and said in a high, squeaky voice, "Why, look there, Percival, I believe there's a man in the water."

Fenton said, "Ssssh. Go away!"

"It *is* a man. Hello there, what're you doing in the



water?" Lee continued. "Are you a real midshipman?"

"Yes," Fenton replied, whispering. "Keep quiet for heaven's sake. Do you see a Jimmy-Legs up there?"

"Jimmy-Legs? What is a Jimmy-Legs? Percival, aren't these middies quaint the way they talk?" Lee said.

"They certainly are," Cy answered in a deep bass voice.

"Shut up!" Fenton growled. "Do you see a guy on a bicycle?"

Lee looked all around, vitally interested in that himself. Not seeing any he said, "Yes. Want me to call him?"

Fenton almost drowned as he shrieked, "No!" then he quieted down. "Listen, will you two chaps do me a favor? Get a rope or something and help me out."

At Lee's feet was a length of broken vaulting pole. "I found something," he squeaked. "We'll pull you out."

Fenton grabbed the pole, but stopped them. "One of those fellows on the bicycle mustn't see me," he warned them. "Be sure there aren't any around."

"I just love the way these middies act," Lee said.

They started pulling Fenton out, his weight heavy on the end of the pole, his feet scraping loudly against the sea wall. Finally he was at the top and Lee decided it was time to do something else. "Here comes one of those people," he squeaked hurriedly, and they turned loose the pole. Fenton, however, the dumb brute, didn't fall back into the water but clung on with his hands to the top of the sea wall. Lee knew that if Fenton got one good look at him his life wouldn't be worth a plugged nickel. Leaning over quickly he put one strong hand in the middle of

Fenton's face and still squeaking, said, "I said 'Here comes one of those men,' " and shoved. Fenton went over backwards and landed with a terrific splash. He gargled about for a long time and finally came up spluttering, but afraid to say anything.



Lee and Brewer waited in the shelter of the stadium until the clock bonged four bells. "Back to work," Lee said, and they returned to their rescue job. Fenton retrieved the floating pole and they hauled him up almost to the top three or four times and, on the pretext of Jimmy-Legs, dropped him back into the water. On the fifth time, after it was almost a habit, they got him up and looked around and here did come two Jimmy-Legs pedaling like mad across the football field. They dropped Fenton unceremoniously and Lee, no longer squeaking, said, "Split!" and started running toward the gun sheds. One of the policemen turned to cut him off. The second almost broke his neck as Brewer, running one way, passed him cycling furiously in the other. Recovering his balance and reversing his direction he made off after Cy who circled the end of the stadium and headed for the sea wall just as Lee circled the other end and headed for him with his own Jimmy-Legs closing in on him.

The two midshipmen hurtled straight at each other

along the smooth paved road. The two Jimmy-Legs, finding the paving an excellent place for bicycling, worked their legs like pistons, the hum of spokes and tires sounding loud and dangerous in the night.

When Brewer was three paces away from him Lee ordered "Left—TURN!" Lee turned to his right, Brewer to his left, and both of them, side by side, headed out across the lacrosse field as the two Jimmy-Legs dashed on. One of them was smart enough to realize the danger of Lee's treacherous maneuver so he turned out toward the field, but the other had turned that way too, and in order to avoid collision had to turn sharply back again. There was quiet for a second with only the hum of wheels and thudding feet; then there was an earthquake-like crash as the unfortunate Jimmy-Legs went full speed ahead into the stadium which was so solidly constructed of concrete and steel that it smashed the bicycle and almost wrecked the Jimmy-Legs.

The other one did not even pause in his determined pursuit as his cohort tried to knock over the stadium, but instead continued after the two fleeing midshipmen. Angered by the defeat of his comrade the Jimmy-Legs gained on them, bending so low over his handle-bars that his nose was almost touching the whirring tire, and pumping the pedals viciously.

With the Jimmy-Legs gaining speed every second, they finally neared the end of the field where a glimmer of steel frame outlined the gaping lacrosse goal. The netting—white, strong rope—hardly showed in the moonlight.

Straight for it the two midshipmen fled. A yard from it Lee ordered, gasping, "Split." They split around the yawning mouth of the goal. "Halt!" Lee ordered. They halted and turned to watch.

It was even better than they could have hoped for. The Jimmy-Legs didn't even see the frame. Crouched low, he scored a perfect goal—his front wheel came tearing through the netting, but the force of his speed pulled the whole thing—netting, frame, guy-wires, posts and what-nots down on top of the Jimmy-Legs, who moaned and groaned and thrashed around as the two plebes came closer to inspect their handiwork.

"Not a bad shot," Lee said to the Jimmy-Legs. "If you come out tomorrow afternoon I might put you on the varsity."

The Jimmy-Legs barked at them as they turned and trotted leisurely back to sick bay.

Inside the dark, quiet room again Lee picked up the telescope and surveyed the field of their late activities. One Jimmy-Legs, the stadium job, was hobbling painfully toward his little house. Fenton was climbing out at the shallow part of the bay. He dashed wobbling across the field in long staggering strides and back into the building. His footsteps on the white concrete were large, wet splotches. "Very sloppy," Lee decided, aloud. Then he trained the glass on the lacrosse goal.

"Imagine," he said. "Percival, that silly man is still playing about in our lacrosse net."



## AN ADVENTURE ON WHEELS

*Being 4 foot-power machines with free  
wheeling and questionable speed.*

Anonymous

Three smart young men and three nice girls  
All lovers true as steel—  
Decided in a friendly way,  
To spend the day awheel.  
They started in the early morn,  
And nothing seemed amiss;  
And when they reached the leafy lanes,  
They            in            like  
rode            twos            this!

They wandered by the verdant dale,  
Beside the rippling rill;  
The sun shone brightly all the while;  
They heard the songbird's trill.  
They sped through many a woodland glade,  
The world was full of bliss—



And when they rested in the shade,  
They sat            in twos            like this!

The sun went down and evening came,  
A lot too soon, they said;  
Too long they tarried on the way,  
The clouds grew black o'erhead.  
Down dashed the rain! They homeward flew,  
Till one unlucky miss  
Slipped sideways—crash! Great Scott!  
The lot  
Were all mixed up like this!

#### WITH A DIFFERENCE \*

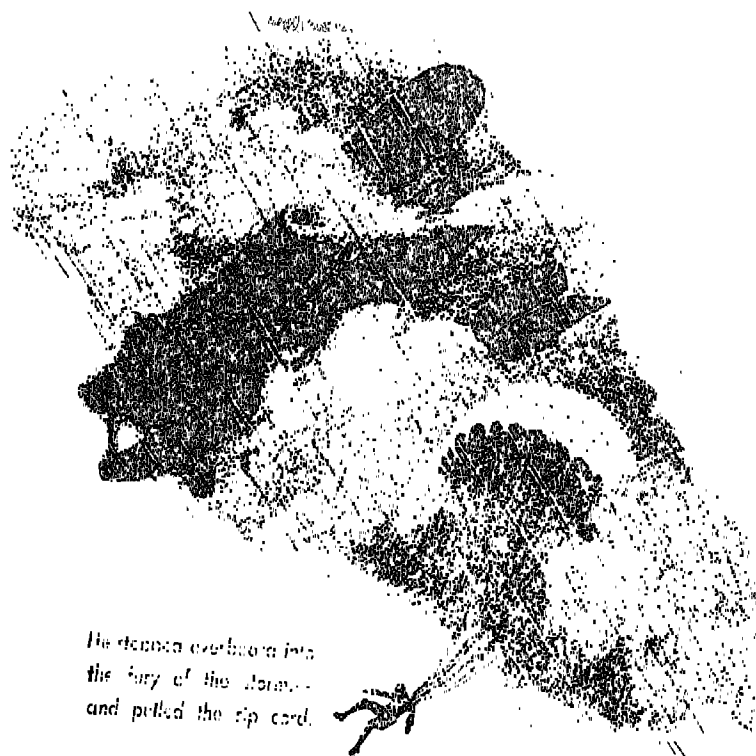
*Can you imagine Tommy's embarrassment?*

*by Caroline Mischka Roberts*

It was a pretty song of spring  
That Tommy Jones had learned to sing  
Before the school on closing day—  
A song appropriate and gay.  
The words of his first line were these:  
“The buds are bursting on the trees.”

But when that day Tom's name was called,  
He faced his audience appalled;  
And this, alas! was what he sung,  
While terror twisted up his tongue  
And stage fright shook his voice and knees:  
“The birds are busting on the trees!”

\* From *Heart Throbs*. Courtesy of Joe Mitchell Chapple, Inc., Publishers.



He tumbled overboard into  
the fury of the storm—  
and pulled the rip cord.

### MAILMAN OVERBOARD \*

Report of Northbound Mail Flight,  
November 23, 1926,

by Charles A. Lindbergh, Pilot C.A.M. No. 2

*At the time when Charles A. Lindbergh wrote this report he was not the great Colonel Lindbergh, but a hard-working mail carrier. His plane had almost none of the safety devices which are on our planes today; there was no short wave radio in the plane so the pilot could call for help or advice; there were few landing fields,—far apart*

\* From *We* by Charles A. Lindbergh. By permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons.

*and poorly lighted; there was no invisible pathway of radio beams to bring the plane safely on its route. This is the story of a flight which occurred in the days of the pioneers of the commercial airways.*

I took off from the Lambert-St. Louis Field at 4:20 P.M., made a five minute stop at Springfield, Illinois, an hour later to take on mail, and then headed for Peoria. Weather reports telephoned to St. Louis earlier in the afternoon gave flying conditions as entirely passable. About twenty-five miles north of Springfield darkness was encountered, the ceiling had lowered to around 400 feet and a light snow was falling. At South Pekin the forward visibility of ground lights from a 150 feet altitude was less than half a mile, and over Pekin the town lights were indistinct from 200 feet above. After passing Pekin the plane was flown at an altimeter reading of 600 feet for about five minutes, when the lightness of the haze below indicated that it was over Peoria. Twice I could see lights on the ground and I descended to less than 200 feet before they disappeared from view. I tried to bank around one group of lights, but was unable to turn quickly enough to keep in sight.

After circling in the vicinity of Peoria for thirty minutes, I decided to try and find better weather conditions by flying northeast towards Chicago. I had ferried a ship from Chicago to St. Louis in the early afternoon, at which time the ceiling and visibility were much better near Chicago than anywhere else along the route. Enough gasoline

for about an hour and ten minutes' flying remained in the gas tank, and twenty minutes in the reserve, hardly enough to return to St. Louis even had I been able to navigate directly to the field by dead reckoning and flying blind the greater portion of the way. The territory towards Chicago was much more favorable for a night landing than that around St. Louis.

For the next half hour the flight northeast was at about 2000 feet altitude, and then at 600 feet. There were now numerous breaks in the clouds and occasionally ground lights could be seen from over 500 feet. After passing over the light of a small town a fairly clear space in the clouds was encountered. I pulled up to about 600 feet, released the parachute flare, whipped the ship around to get into the wind and under the flare which lit at once. Instead of floating down slowly, however, it dropped like a rock. I could see the ground for only an instant and then there was total darkness. Meantime the ship was in a steep bank, and being blinded by the intense light I had trouble righting it. An effort to find the ground with the wing lights was in vain as their glare was worse than useless in the haze.

When about ten minutes of gas remained in the pressure tank and still not the faintest outline of any object on the ground could be seen, I decided to leave the ship rather than attempt to land blindly. I turned back southwest toward less populated country and started climbing in an attempt to get over the clouds before jumping. The main tank went dry at 7:50 P.M. and the reserve twenty minutes later. The altimeter then registered approximately 14,000

feet, yet the top of the clouds was apparently several thousand feet higher. Rolling the stabilizer back, I cut out the switches, pulled the ship up into a stall and was about to go over the right side of the cockpit when the right wing began to drop. In this position the plane would gather speed and spiral to the right, possibly striking the parachute after its first turn. I returned to the controls, righted the plane and then dove over the left side of the cockpit while the air speed registered about 70 miles per hour and the altimeter 13,000 feet. The rip cord was pulled immediately after clearing the stabilizer. The Irving chute functioned perfectly. I left the ship head first and was falling in this position when the risers whipped me around into an upright position and the chute opened. The last I saw of the DH was as it disappeared into the clouds just after the chute opened. It was snowing and very cold. For the first minute or so the parachute descended smoothly and then commenced an excessive oscillation which continued for about five minutes and which could not be checked. The first indication of the nearness of the chute to the ground was a gradual darkening of the space below. The snow had turned to rain and, although the chute was thoroughly soaked, its oscillation had greatly decreased. I directed the beam from my 500 feet spotlight downward, but the ground appeared so suddenly that I landed directly on top of a barbed wire fence without seeing it. The fence helped to break the fall and the barbs did not penetrate my heavy flying suit. The chute was blown over the fence and was held open for some time by the gusts of wind before collapsing.

After rolling the chute into its pack I started towards the nearest light. I soon came to a road, walked about a mile to the town of Covell, Illinois, and telephoned a report to St. Louis. The only information I could obtain in regard to the crashed plane was from one of a group of farmers in the general store, who stated that his neighbor had heard the plane crash but could only guess at its general direction. An hour's search proved without avail. I left instructions to place a guard over the mail in case the plane was found before I returned and went to Chicago for another ship. On arriving over Covell the next morning I found the wreck with a small crowd gathered around it, less than 500 feet back of the house where I had left my parachute the night before. The nose and the wheels had struck the ground at the same time, and after sliding along for about 75 feet it had piled up in a pasture beside a hedge fence. One wheel had come off and was standing inflated against the wall on the inside of a hog house a hundred yards further on. It had gone through two fences and the wall of the house. The wings were badly splintered, but the tubular fuselage, although badly bent in places, had held its general form even in the mail pit. The parachute from the flare was hanging on the tailskid.

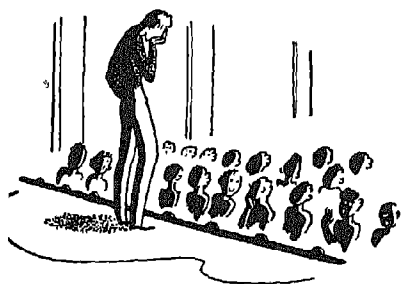
There were three sacks of mail in the plane. One, a full bag from St. Louis, had been split open and some of the mail oil-soaked but legible. The other two bags were only partially full and were undamaged.

I delivered the mail to Maywood by plane to be dispatched on the next ships out.

## ARE YOU SHY?

### *A Self-Test*

Are you easily embarrassed? Are you shy? By answering the following questions you can determine to what extent you are shy.



1. Do you join in group singing and enjoy it?
2. Would you accept the position of cheer leader if it were offered you?

3. Could you make an announcement from the stage before a large audience?

4. Would you stay at home from a party if your clothes were "out of style"?





## THE GREEN MOUNTAIN JUSTICE

*It must have been fun—for Phoebe!*

Anonymous

"The snow is deep," the Justice said;  
"There's mighty mischief overhead."  
"High talk, indeed!" his wife exclaimed;  
"What, sir! shall Providence be blamed?"  
The Justice, laughing, said, "Oh, no!  
I only meant the loads of snow  
Upon the roofs. The barn is weak;  
I greatly fear the roof will break.  
So hand me up the shovel, my dear,  
I'll mount the barn, the roof to clear."  
"No!" said the wife; "the barn is high,  
And if you slip, and fall, and die,



How will my living be secured?  
Stephen, your life is not insured!

"But tie a rope your waist around,  
And it will hold you safe and sound."  
"I will," said he. "Now for the roof.  
All snugly tied, and danger-proof!  
Excelsior! Excel— But no!  
The rope is not secured below!"  
Said Rachel, "Climb the end to throw  
Across the top, and I will go  
And tie that end around my waist."  
"Well, every woman to her taste;  
You always would be tightly laced.  
Rachel, when you became my bride,  
I thought the knot securely tied;  
But lest the bond should break in twain,  
I'll have it fastened once again."

Below the arm-pits tied around.  
She takes her station on the ground.  
While on the roof, beyond the ridge,  
He shovels clear the lower edge,  
But, sad mischance! the loosened snow  
Comes sliding down, to plunge below.  
And as he tumbles with the slide,  
Up Rachel goes on t'other side.  
Just half-way down the Justice hung:  
Just half-way up the woman swung.



"Good land o' Goshen!" shouted she;  
"Why, do you see it?" answered he.

The couple, dangling in the breeze,  
Like turkeys hung outside to freeze,  
At their rope's end and wit's end, too,  
Shout back and forth what best to do.  
Cried Stephen, "Take it coolly, wife;  
All have their ups and downs in life."  
Quoth Rachel, "What a pity 't is  
To joke at such a time as this!  
A man whose wife is being hung  
Should know enough to hold his tongue."  
"Now, Rachel, as I look below,  
I see a tempting heap of snow.  
Suppose, my dear, I take my knife,  
And cut the rope to save my life."  
She shouted, "Don't! 't would be my death;  
I see some pointed stones beneath.  
A better way would be to call,  
With all our might, for Phebe Hall."  
"Agreed!" he roared. First he, then she  
Gave tongue: "O Phebe! Phebe! *Phe-e-*  
*be* Hall!" in tones both fine and coarse,  
Enough to make a drover hoarse.

Now Phebe, over at the farm,  
Was sitting sewing snug and warm;  
But hearing, as she thought, her name,

Sprang up, and to the rescue came,  
Beheld the scene, and thus she thought:  
"If now a kitchen chair were brought,  
And I could reach the lady's foot,  
I'd draw her downward by the boot,  
Then cut the rope, and let him go;  
He cannot miss the pile of snow."  
He sees her moving toward his wife,  
Armed with a chair and carving knife,  
And, ere he is aware, perceives  
His head ascending to the eaves;  
And, guessing what the two are at,  
Screams from beneath the roof, "Stop that!  
You make me fall too far, by half!"  
But Phebe answers, with a laugh,  
"Please tell a body by what right  
You've brought your wife to such a plight!"  
And then, with well-directed blows,  
She cuts the rope and down he goes.

The wife untied, they walk around,  
When lo! no Stephen can be found.  
They call in vain, run to and fro;  
They look around, above, below;  
No trace or token can they see,  
And deeper grows the mystery.  
Then Rachel's heart within her sank;  
But, glancing at the snowy bank,  
She caught a little gleam of hope,—

A gentle movement of the rope.  
They scrape away a little snow;  
What's this! A hat! Ah! he's below.  
Then upward heaves the snowy pile,  
And forth he stalks in tragic style,  
Unhurt, and with a roguish smile;  
And Rachel sees, with glad surprise,  
The missing found, the fallen rise.

#### FOUR-LEAF CLOVER \*

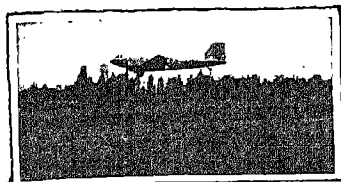
by Ella Higginson

I know a place where the sun is like gold,  
And the cherry blossoms burst with snow,  
And down underneath is the loveliest nook,  
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.

One leaf is for hope, and one is for faith,  
And one is for love, you know,  
And God put another in for luck,—  
If you search, you will find where they grow.

But you must have hope, and you must have faith,  
You must love and be strong—and so,  
If you work, if you wait, you will find the place  
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.

\* By permission of the author.



# HOBBIES

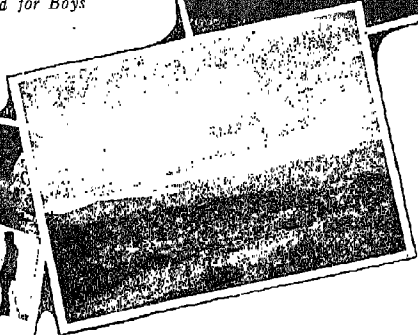
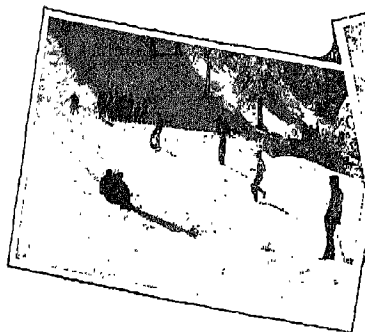
## FROM ONE HOBBY TO ANOTHER \*

*Everybody collects something—stamps, matchboxes, or butterflies. Read how easy it is to have a collection of photographs. And how much fun!*

by Ben Davis

I know a young man whose hobby is fishing; but some of his friends say that he would rather take a picture of a fish than catch it. Whenever he tells a "tall one" about a prize catch and there seems to be doubt in the mind of his listener, he can produce a snapshot to prove his claim. He has a picture of almost

\* By permission of *The Open Road for Boys Magazine*.



every size and kind of fish he has caught during the past several years.

I know another fellow whose hobby is boats. He has built miniature models of sailboats, cruisers, tugboats, destroyers, and he has constructed them all from plans inspired by snapshots of real vessels that he took with an inexpensive camera.

It's dollars to doughnuts that your own hobby has excellent picture possibilities.

Suppose you are interested in wild animals. You'd like to go to Africa and shoot lions, leopards, and elephants. That is not practical for most of us, but you can "shoot" these animals with a camera at the zoo, and there will be no game laws or bag limits to interfere with your fun. In many parks the surroundings are so much like the native homes of the animals that you can almost imagine yourself hunting in a wilderness.

In most zoos there are nearly as many different kinds of animals as there are letters in the alphabet. That gives us the chance to take an animal picture for each letter. To illustrate "A," "shoot" an ape, for "B," a buffalo, for "Z" a zebra. I once saw a very attractive album which a photographer had made by allowing a page for each animal and letter. After getting a picture of an animal, he looked up interesting and odd facts about it and added that information to the page.

A neighbor of mine who is keen about birds has fixed up a clever arrangement for snapping pictures of them. Outside a window he has erected a feeding platform. He

calls it a "picture perch," for near by he has his camera set and focused. When a bird comes to feed, he photographs it. Of course, it took several days for birds to become accustomed to the strange "studio," but now they use it regularly.

Two model airplane enthusiasts photograph their models as soon as they are completed. The airplanes "crack up," but the pictures remain. Another boy I know of, has made a hobby of photographing his mother's flowers. And after he began taking pictures of the colorful blooms, he became an interested gardener himself.

Why not start now to let pictures give added fun to your hobby? Elaborate equipment is not necessary. Start with the camera you already have. If you are in doubt how to operate it for best results, consult your local photographic dealer. He will gladly explain the ways to use your camera in photographs for your specific hobby, whether it is collecting pictures of trees, lighthouses, trains, cloud formations, beautiful doorways, parades, ball players, or wild life.

Here are a few suggestions that may be helpful:

If you plan, for example, to shoot animals at the zoo, you'll find almost any snapshot camera that you hold in your hands satisfactory. If the camera is a Brownie, be sure your subjects are in sunlight when you snap the picture. Don't try to make pictures of objects in deep shade. With a camera having an f.6.3, or faster lens, however, the shade need not stop you from getting a picture, but even then you will have better success if you wait until a

dark subject walks into the brighter light. Just try it.

After you have mastered the technique of "bagging" the animals at the zoo, you will want to try your luck at getting pictures of squirrels, rabbits, and other game in a woods. This type of photography requires extra skill, for you must get close to your "prey" and at the same time conceal yourself and your camera from it.

In photographing flowers you will usually get better results if you take a picture of a single plant or bloom, rather than of an entire bed. For effective work of this kind you need a portrait attachment, a tripod or other solid support, and a large piece of gray or black cardboard. The film you use should be panchromatic or super-sensitive panchromatic.

The portrait attachment is merely an inexpensive lens in a small metal mount that slips over the regular camera lens. It enables you to set the camera much closer to a flower than is possible without it.

Place the cardboard behind the plant or bloom to separate it from any confusing surroundings. Set the camera on the tripod, or other support, and focus very carefully. It is a good plan to measure the distance, if you use a camera without a ground glass. You will get the most beautiful effects if you select a day when the sun is shining but is shielded by light clouds or haze. And if you are seeking still greater perfection, place a color filter on the camera lens, as well as the portrait attachment. This is easily done by putting the two mounts back to back and fastening them together with a small strip of adhesive tape.



If you are interested in landscapes, lighthouses, clouds, or any other subject of scenic nature, you will find that a sky filter is a valuable accessory. It consists of a special type of glass, half clear, half yellow, encased in a metal mount (just like a portrait attachment and color filter) for slipping over the lens of your camera. Its purpose is better to bring out clouds in the sky without necessitating a change in the time exposure. It is especially good for use with box and other single lens cameras. Without the filter, clouds do not usually appear in the finished print as prominently as they do when viewed by the human eye.

If your hobby is of an architectural nature, I suggest that you carry your camera with you wherever you go. You are likely to come on the most interesting old houses, doorways, etc., when you least expect them. If you object to carrying a box camera or a large folding model, you'll find numerous small models on the market,—some no bigger than the palm of your hand.


Regardless of what camera you use or what pictures you take, keep an accurate record of your shots—it will help you improve your work. When you make a snapshot or time exposure, jot down the date, type of subject, time of day, condition of light (sunny, cloudy, dull, etc.), shutter speed used, and the kind of film on which the picture is taken.

Spring, summer, fall and winter—all are filled with picture-taking possibilities for both outdoor and indoor hobbyists. Start now to make your hobby more valuable by recording it on film.



## THE INCHCAPE ROCK

by Robert Southey



No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,  
The ship was still as she could be;  
Her sails from heaven received no motion;  
Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock,  
The waves flowed over the Inchcape Rock;  
So little they rose, so little they fell;  
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The Abbot of Aberbrothok  
Had placed that Bell on the Inchcape Rock;  
On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,  
And over the waves its warning rung.

When the Rock was hid by the surge's swell,  
The mariners heard the warning Bell;  
And then they knew the perilous Rock,  
And blest the Abbot of Aberbrothok.

The Sun in heaven was shining gay;  
All things were joyful on that day;  
The sea-birds screamed as they wheeled round,  
And there was joyance in their sound.

The buoy of the Inchcape Bell was seen,  
A darker speck on the ocean green:  
Sir Ralph the Rover walked his deck,  
And he fixed his eye on the darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of spring;  
It made him whistle, it made him sing:  
His heart was mirthful to excess,  
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the Inchcape float:  
Quoth he, "My men, put out the boat,  
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,  
And I'll plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

The boat is lowered, the boatmen row,  
And to the Inchcape Rock they go;  
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat,  
And he cut the Bell from the Inchcape float.

Down sunk the Bell with a gurgling sound;  
The bubbles rose and burst around:  
Quoth Sir Ralph, "The next who comes to the Rock  
Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

Sir Ralph the Rover sailed away;  
He scoured the seas for many a day;

And now, grown rich with plundered store,  
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky,  
They cannot see the Sun on high:  
The wind hath blown a gale all day;  
At evening it hath died away.

On the deck the Rover takes his stand;  
So dark it is, they see no land.  
Quoth Sir Ralph, "It will be lighter soon,  
For there is the dawn of the rising Moon."

"Canst hear," said one, "the breakers roar?  
For methinks we should be near the shore."  
"Now where we are I cannot tell,  
But I wish I could hear the Inchcape Bell."

They hear no sound; the swell is strong;  
Though the wind hath fallen, they drift along,  
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock:  
"Alas! it is the Inchcape Rock!"

Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair,  
He curst himself in his despair:  
The waves rush in on every side;  
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But, even in his dying fear,  
One dreadful sound could the Rover hear,—  
A sound as if, with the Inchcape Bell,  
The Devil below was ringing his knell.

## I SAW NAPOLEON \*

Napoleon?—The great general  
who became emperor of France.  
The time?—The year 1810.

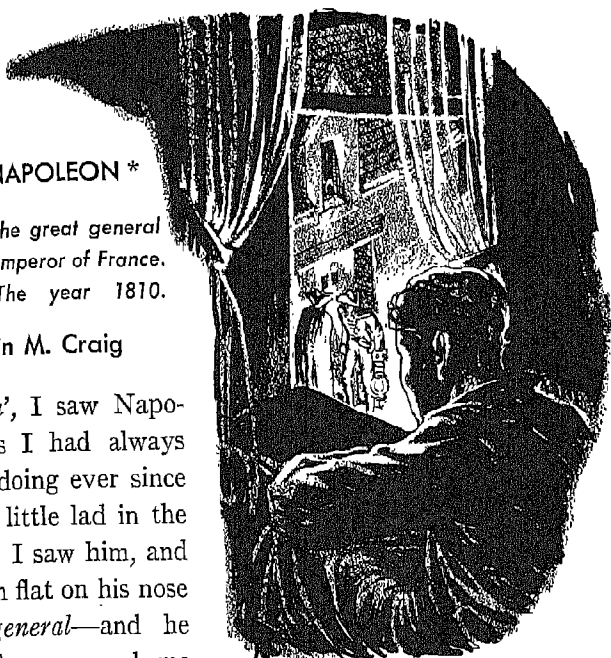
by Calvin M. Craig

Yes, *m's'u'*, I saw Napoleon, just as I had always dreamed of doing ever since I was but a little lad in the Revolution. I saw him, and I pushed him flat on his nose—*le bon general*—and he said that France owed me more than it would ever know. I tell you, it is true!

*Mon oncle*—my Uncle Maurice, that is—was strangely disturbed when Napoleon came to our little village of Avignon, and he threatened to flog me within an inch of my life if I went out with the people to watch the soldiers march into town. But the temptation to see Napoleon was too much. When the cheering crowd thronged around the house where the general had made his headquarters, I was in the front ranks.

I was so absorbed in watching the windows for a glimpse of the great man that I did not hear a quiet footfall behind me. A hand was placed on my shoulder, and I turned about to find myself looking up at one of the officers.

\* By permission of the author, and courtesy of *Boys' Life*, published by the Boy Scouts of America.



"You live here in Avignon?" he asked, with a smile that he meant to be pleasant. I nodded eagerly, flattered to be talking to one of Napoleon's men.

"Well, *mon enfant*," he went on, dropping his tone to a whisper and leading me out of earshot of the others, "perhaps you can tell me where lives Monsieur Maurice Patou?"

I was struck dumb. It seemed impossible that this great soldier should know my uncle's name and ask to be directed to our house. Breathlessly, I told him who I was, and offered to take him home.

"*Non, non, non*, Jean," he said, dropping his voice lower still. "I cannot go now, but tell your uncle that Captain Bragnon will see him at midnight, and say to him that 'the Republic shall be without end.' Go quickly, and tell no one else."

He was watching over his shoulder as he spoke, and it was not hard to see that he did not want it known that he had given me a message. I ran straight home to my uncle, forgetting the promised flogging.

"The Republic shall be without end!" I cried as I opened the door. "Captain Bragnon will be here at midnight."

"Mon Dieu, what are you saying!" Uncle Maurice snapped, grabbing me across the mouth. "Whisper, you young fool, where did you hear that?"

As fast as the words would come, I told what had happened and a smile grew over his face as he listened. "*Très bien*!" he kept repeating. "The great opportunity."

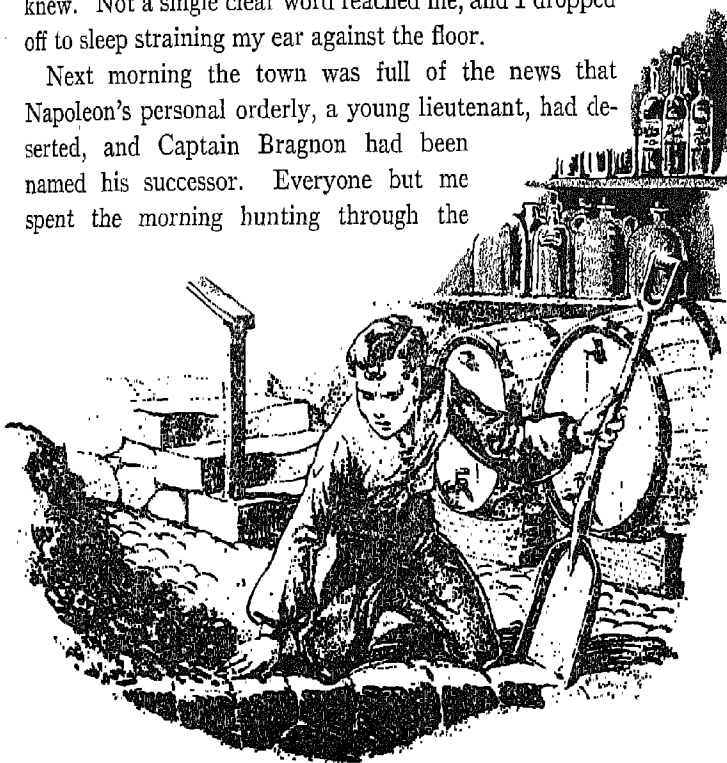
"What is it?" I asked.

"Eh? Get upstairs, you young jackanapes, get upstairs and forget all you've heard, or you'll get the beating you've deserved for this day's work."

I was still in my room when the guard went about crying midnight, and as I looked out after his lantern, I saw two men mount our step, and give a peculiar knock. A knock inside followed, and then another from the visitors before the door opened.

"The Republic shall be without end," the men whispered together, and were whisked inside. Within a few minutes a third figure, this one quietly rattling spurs and sword, came and entered after the same procedure. What they talked about, in the room below me, or how long, I never knew. Not a single clear word reached me, and I dropped off to sleep straining my ear against the floor.

Next morning the town was full of the news that Napoleon's personal orderly, a young lieutenant, had deserted, and Captain Bragnon had been named his successor. Everyone but me spent the morning hunting through the



woods and fields for the missing man. I suddenly found myself put to work filling up a dry old well in our cellar.

The well had been open as long as I could remember, but for some reason, my uncle had decided that it was dangerous, and should be filled at once. He had even filled up two or three feet of it himself before I had gotten up.

As I worked, my mind was puzzling over the events of the night before, and my eye was caught by a short piece of golden cord, caught in the stones at the edge of the well.

"Aha!" I thought. "Uncle Maurice was bringing Captain Bragnon down here to pick out some wine from the stock, and a piece dropped from his epaulette. The captain walked too close to the hole, nearly fell in, and *mon oncle* got a sharp piece of somebody's mind. So that is why he wants it filled up!"

Pretty well pleased with myself as a detective, I puzzled some more. "The Republic shall be without end"—a pretty password, reminding me of old Revolutionary days. What sort of political group could my aristocrat-hating old uncle have gotten into, and what could happen to our Republic now, with so great a man as Napoleon to protect—Napoleon! I started at the thought.

Uncle Maurice had always said that the Republic would not be safe until all the blue blood in France was spilled. The day the general came, he had growled to me that Napoleon was great—too great——

"Fire!"

I dropped my thoughts and my shovel and dashed off



after the running crowd at top speed, but my thoughts were bound to get back to the general with a bump. His headquarters was a mass of flames.

Quick as the bucket lines were formed, the pails were not passed quicker than was the rumor that the deserter had set the fire in an attempt to destroy the general, and Captain Bragnon confirmed it.

"A good thing the general was not in the house, or it would have been a sorry day, this," he went around saying fiercely. "The villain started the fire in a dozen places. If I could lay my hands on him, he'd die sweating for this!"

The fire was still smouldering when the Captain had arranged to have the general and his staff quartered at the home of Monsieur Anton Grumbeau, on the other side of town. This was a surprise, for old Grumbeau bitterly hated all soldiers, and it appeared that Bragnon must have forced him to give up his house. Grumbeau himself, according to reports, was leaving at once for Paris.

The captain himself took charge of preparing the new quarters, and when all was ready, I heard him tell the officer under him that the general would return from his travels promptly at ten that night. The officer frowned in perplexity, but said nothing until Bragnon had gone.

"What time is the general returning?" he asked a non-commissioned officer nearby.

"Nine o'clock, sir."

"Are you sure? Captain Bragnon has just advised me that it is ten."

"Perhaps the general changed the hour," suggested the

sergeant. "At first, he said nine. I heard him tell Captain Bragnon as he was leaving."

"Did any of the officers with him return later?"

"*Non, mon lieutenant.*"

"M-m-m. Bragnon must have forgotten the hour, and dear pity him when he comes back an hour too late to receive the general," sighed the lieutenant. "And dear pity anyone I would send to interrupt his drinking in town to warn him. Let it be a lesson to him!"

I walked rapidly homeward, finding myself, a few minutes later, following in the captain's footsteps. As I walked along behind him, I was thinking of all the mysterious things that had happened: the desertion of the officer, the burning of the general's headquarters, Bragnon's friendship with my uncle, the meeting at night, and all the while, I was absently watching the captain's cords and epaulettes sparkle in the setting sun's last rays. As I looked at them, a surprising fact slowly penetrated into my understanding, and my brain suddenly seemed to swirl around in my head.

*The captain's epaulettes were not gold, but silver!*

I must have made a little noise in my throat, for he spun around and confronted me.

"*Mon Dieu*, but you frighten a man. Why do you sneak around behind one like a cat, eh?" he snarled, in a nervous fury. "Why you're white and trembling. What's wrong?"

"Please, captain," I gasped, for I was sick and weak at that moment, if ever I was, "I had a cramp—here. It is better now. I did not know it was you in front of me be-

cause I thought your epaulettes were gold," I lied, nodding at his shoulders.

"Well, you're wrong," he said gruffly, telling me just what I had not dared ask outright. "A captain does not wear the decorations of a lieutenant. My epaulettes have been silver for ten years."

No more was said between us, and when we got home, I managed to have another cramp, and my uncle sent me off to bed. I did not go upstairs too quickly to spy a strange pair of shoes, with feet in them, through the doorway of our parlor. They were drawn back quickly as I passed.

I seemed in such misery with my groaning that my uncle did not lock me in my room, and after making my bed creak loudly for a few moments, I crawled out to the head of the stairs. The men were smoking and playing cards, and nothing important came to my straining ears until I finally heard Bragnon's ugly voice saying:

"The fool, he ought to have it set by now."

"He'll be here when it's done," my uncle put in. "Are you sure he can manage?"

"Can he? What's to hinder?" demanded Bragnon. "He entered with the crowd, and disappeared into the secret closet without being noticed. I cleared the house, showed the soldiers all the other closets to clear our skirts, and left him alone in the place. There's nothing can jam up the secret passageway out, is there, Grumbeau?"

Grumbeau! So those fine slippers had been his! What was he doing in our house, after he had left, apparently, for Paris?

Grumbeau merely grunted for an answer. Bragnon swore. I heard my uncle fumble with his watch chain and say, "Eight o'clock."

"One hour till the general gets back!" groaned the captain.

I pricked up my ears. Bragnon really expected Napoleon back at nine, and he had deliberately left a false impression behind him that he believed the hour was ten! My brain was on fire. There was no doubt that they were plotting against Napoleon, and it was just at that moment that I discovered Bragnon was a wicked traitor. My uncle had a horrible fear of Napoleon and Grumbeau was an evil miser who would be into any deviltry.

Bragnon was pacing impatiently up and down the hall below me. I dared not move my head, but lay in plain view, though my hair probably passed for a cat sleeping on the stair in the dark.

"Ten minutes of nine," droned Uncle Maurice after an eternity had passed.

"Name of a Name!" swore the captain, tearing his hair, I imagined, although I dared not look. "Will the idiot never come?"

Like an answer, there was a tiny tap on the door, the same signal I had heard the night before. My uncle repeated it on the inside of the panel, and again the man outside rapped, before the door swung outward.

"The Republic shall be——"

"Come inside, fool," rasped Bragnon.

A little old man with hunched back and claw-like hands

slipped inside, giggling, and I recognized him as Little Tony, the half-witted gunsmith. It was no longer necessary to hide my face.

"Is't done?" demanded Bragnon, hoarsely.

"Will it do the trick?" pressed Uncle Maurice.

"Out with it, man, out with it!" insisted Grumbeau fiercely.

"Hee-hee!" shrilled the gunsmith. "Your great Napoleon's on his way to his death at this minute. When Tony fixes a trap gun, it goes off, it does. It goes off. It's a hard bed he'll find when he opens the drapes around it, but he'll sleep long."

My body went clammy cold, and I could not move a muscle. Bragnon took a deep breath. My uncle smiled at Grumbeau, and Grumbeau leered heavily into space. There was silence until my uncle spoke.

"Nine o'clock."

I wanted to scream, to get up and run, to try to leap at all their plotting, murdering throats at once. What was old Tony saying?

"*Mais, oui.* There'll be no missing. I set the gun between the pillows. It's aimed at the height of his chest, and loaded with big buckshot that would blow in the side of an ox. I'm no fool. He has to stand—so—to pull the ribbon that opens the drapes. No pushing 'em back with your hand the way you do in the beds o' common nobility. He'll stand there, and pull the cord, and it'll be the trigger he'll pull. Him and two feet on each side o' him'll be showered with shot. I'm no fool," he giggled.

"The deuce! Suppose Napoleon's late," the soldier grated. "Will he wait until ten o'clock when I've told them I expect him? It would mean that I would have to kill him with my own hands or open the drapes myself!"

Every eye was turned on him, and I suddenly came to life and sprang to my knees. A big vase rocked under the impact of my elbow. There was not a second to be lost. At that moment, Napoleon might be walking into his bedroom. What would I do?

The vase settled it for me when it plunged down the stairs, over my head, and landed in the midst of the plotters. There was a shout, and I was discovered.

I dived back through the dark hall, and with a sudden inspiration, slammed shut the door that led to the attic, and huddled in a corner. Never suspecting a trick, they piled over each other up the steps. Half a dozen seconds later I was down and out the front door, legging it for Napoleon's headquarters with a fifty-yard start on Captain Bragnon.

But Bragnon was wise. He ran only to a tinker's cart, threw the driver into the gutter, and lashed at the horse like mad. I dodged into an alleyway, but he made no attempt to catch me, careening straight down the street toward Napoleon's headquarters.

He was there long ahead of me. Just around the corner from the place, I came across the old cart and the heaving horse with a badly cut back. Bragnon I saw walking on the lawn, and speaking with another officer. I saw his game. He had abandoned the horse out of sight and had

approached quietly, as if he were returning to get ready to receive the general. He would be surprised to learn he was late, and would stay among the soldiers until he heard the gun discharged.

Me? I saw myself, the way I would appear. A breathless youngster from the town, trying to break into Napoleon's bed chamber—maybe an assassin. Bragnon would run me through with his sword—and Napoleon as good as dead by his own cowardly hand.

I tell you I was mad. I would not have Napoleon die such a death at the hands of such villains. I ran for the house. A sentry crossed his bayoneted gun against me. I saw his heels backed up against the big stone where Monsieur Grumbeau used to step when he alighted from his coach. Without slowing up, I threw out my arms and planted my hands on his chest.

He fell over backward with his heels high in the air, and the musket discharged harmlessly over our heads. Bragnon disappeared in a side door. As I rushed the front one, I dodged a sword thrown at me by the lieutenant who could not get to his feet quickly enough to get his hands on me.

With some crazy notion in my head that it might be of some use to me, I snatched it out of the door panel and ran inside, slamming the heavy oak behind me and throwing the big latch. I looked up the staircase before me, and there stood Bragnon, drawing his rapier.

"General Bonaparte!" I yelled at the top of my lungs.  
"General Bonaparte!"

There was not a sound. Bragnon, baring his fangs like some hideous animal, sprang down the steps lightly as a panther, his blade before him. A thrill ran through my arm as I raised my own blade, and held it at "guard." I had never held a real sword in my hand before, but the balance was so perfect compared to the wooden foils we boys used to fence with that I felt a sudden burst of confidence. I ground my teeth back at Bragnon, and told him to come on.

I was not as tall as he was, nor as strong. My confidence ebbed as he actually laughed at me, and then came flooding back as I turned aside his first thrust as if it had been in a fencing match in our yard at home.

His face darkened with fury. I parried a second thrust and his





rage knew no bounds. It was his very anger that saved me, for it made him fence like a clumsy butcher.

Each time I danced clear and prepared for him again. I did not dare try a thrust of my own. Once his point cut through my jacket, and once I took a scratch across the cheek. I danced, always backward. I knocked down chairs in his way. I pulled down a curtain on his head. I kicked a big vase against his legs. I hurled a statuette past his ear with my left hand as we swept through the hall. Each thrust I parried, and each time he came closer.

Finally he made a long, bad thrust beside my body. Automatically, I found myself following his blade back with my own. I was cutting a tiny, sharp circle around his sword, and catching my point in his hilt. I heard a wild laugh break through my lips as I felt his grip shift. It was an old disarming trick I had done hundreds of times with wooden foils.

"Swine of a traitor!" I yelled, and the same instant his sword rolled at his feet.

I am not a soldier, and I had to turn my back. In his quick dive to get possession of the sword again, Bragon slipped, and with the point of my sword caught against his breast pocket, he fell upon it. A horrid gurgling sound and a wheezing breath reached my ears as I dashed up the stairs. Gun butts were beating on the front and side doors.

"General! Napoleon!" I screamed as I ran through the upper hall, and flung back the doors of the main bedroom.

Still in uniform, but hatless, as if he had sat thinking a

while before inspecting his room, he was standing in front of the drapery around his bed. Even at that moment, as I stood panting in the doorway, he raised his fingers along the hanging ribbons, and gave them a little twist around his finger.

"*Non, non, non!*" I shrieked, and plunged across the room at him, full tilt. He spun on his heel and bored me through with little, hard, gray eyes that might have stopped me short, had circumstances been different.

"*Non!*" I gasped, but without altering his face a trifle, he moved his hand. You see, *m's'u'*, one should not shout "*non*" at the so-great Napoleon without giving reasons. Not Napoleon.

What could I do? His hand was pulling down the ribbon. I pushed him. I pushed him half way across the room and he went tripping over a footstool on his face—but the ribbon had been wrapped around his finger.

Bang!

I remember throwing up my arm before my face and trying to drop to the floor. My arm suddenly seemed dipped in fire, bent, twisted, and torn, and I went down on my knees.

The next thing I knew, I was really seeing Napoleon for the first time. He was holding me up, with his arm under my head, and looking at my wounded arm. They say, *m's'u'*, that Napoleon is a hard man, but it is not so. His eyes were like my mother's as he looked into mine, all tender, and with tears in them, and his lips trembled as he spoke to me. They do not understand Napoleon.

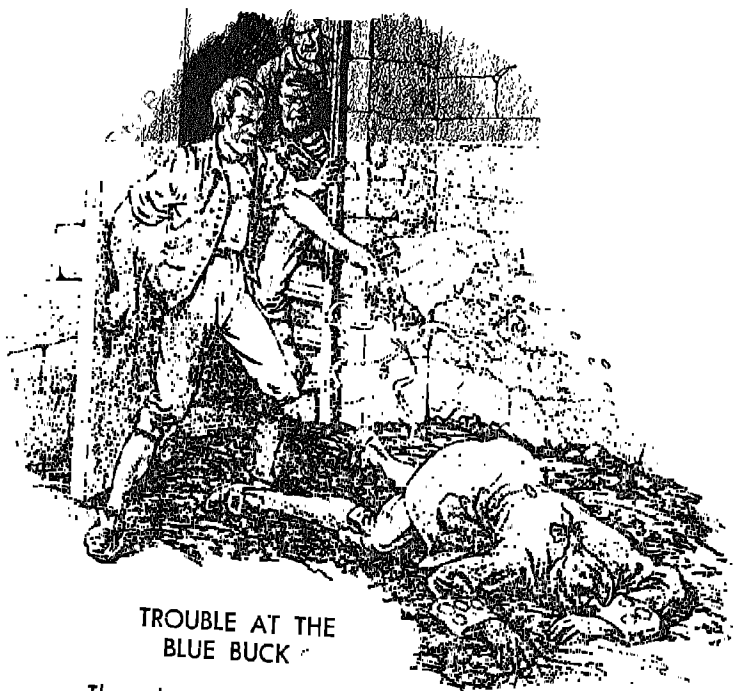
Everything went black again, and I was in the hospital for a long time before I awoke. The general had been to see me every day.

They told me that I had been delirious, and that I had talked much and long for two days. In that time I had said enough to have the soldiers arrest my uncle, Little Tony, and Monsieur Grumbeau. They dealt with them in their own way. That was sad, for I do not think I would have informed on them if I had been in my senses. Their own shame would have been enough. Bragnon? He had taken care of himself, and there was no need of a fourth firing squad.

One of the first things I had raved about was the gold braid in our cellar and my amazement over Bragnon's wearing silver. The soldiers dug up the well and found the body of the "deserter." He had been drugged, bound, and knifed. The plotters' alibi had turned against them, for instead of my being able to say that I had filled the well myself and that nothing was wrong, I had been set on the track of the whole thing when I was called back from hunting the deserter to bury him.

And that is the story of how I came to see the great Napoleon, face to face, and why I am an officer honorary, and why I am a wearer of the *medaille de France*, the youngest in the whole army.

So now, *m's'u'*, I shall go home, if you will help me on with my overcoat. *Ma foi*, but it's a nuisance getting into a coat when you have but one arm left, and only a bit of a stump at the other shoulder!



### TROUBLE AT THE BLUE BUCK

*The makers of our Constitution  
had no easy time—nor did their  
page boy, Toby.*

*by Stephen W. Meader*

A cool little breeze stirred in the August dawn. It stole into Toby Wayne's attic bedroom, causing Toby to reach down sleepily and pull the rumpled sheet over him. He was snuggling luxuriously into his pillow for another nap when his mother's voice sounded with emphatic shrillness from below.

"Tobias! It's past sunup. Your breakfast 'll be ready in five minutes, and I've ironed fresh ruffles for you to wear."

A pause. Then—"Toby! Did you hear me?"

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His answer was something between a groan and yawn. Dragging his legs over the side of the bed, he stood up and rubbed his eyes. The window of his room looked out over low roofs and chimney pots toward the river and the Jersey shore. Through the shipmasts along the water front the red eye of the sun blazed at him. Another hot day!

The wheels of a handcart trundled over the cobbles outside, and a cracked old voice mumbled a singsong refrain:

"Milk—fresh milk! Tuppence a noggin."

It was old Higgins, who pastured half a dozen cows on a farm at the edge of the Northern Liberties. Toby leaned out the window and watched him pour milk from his copper can into a pitcher held by one of the neighbors.

"News in the town ain't so good this mornin'," the milkman was saying. "A pack o' Delaware men j'ined up with some sailors off a Boston brig last night an' marched up Ches'nut Street yellin' out threats ag'in' the Convention. For a while it looked like there'd be a few heads broke."

Toby had no time to listen to more. He hustled into his white cotton stockings and pulled on the plum-colored breeches of his best suit. Stout shoes with steel buckles came next.

Before putting on his shirt he scrubbed his hands and face at the washstand; then running a comb quickly through the long locks of his hair, he twisted it into a tight braid behind and tied the end with a bit of black ribbon.

Breakfast was laid for him on the deal table in the kitchen when he came downstairs. He could hear his mother bustling about in the little shop that formed the

front part of the house. She was a widow who kept herself and her son by selling yarn and thread, needles, buttons, and an occasional bolt of cloth.

Toby looked around the kitchen and snapped his fingers. "Tiger—here, Tiger!" he called.

At that, Mrs. Wayne's head appeared in the doorway.

"Don't you stop to fool with that dog, now, Tobias," she warned. "I've an errand for you to do and you'll be late."

"There now, Mother," Toby grinned, giving her shoulder a pat. "Don't get in a fluster about me. I'll have time to do your errand and still be at the State House before any of the gentlemen get there."

As he fell to on his bowl of porridge, Mrs. Wayne wrapped a small parcel in a sheet of paper torn from the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. "Buttons and ribbands for a dress Mrs. McCosh is making," she explained. "Hers is the little brick house on Second Street below Walnut. Tell her the price is two shillings and be sure you get it in hard money."

It was half past seven when Toby finished breakfast. He let his mother tie the snowy linen ruffles at his throat, donned his buff waistcoat and three-cornered hat, and carried the plum-colored coat over his arm. In the sultry heat which had already descended over the city, he didn't want to wear it until he had to.

Tiger was waiting for him in the yard outside—an old beagle hound, white with mustard-colored spots. He waddled forward eagerly on short, bowed legs, panting a

greeting to his master. There was utter devotion in his mournful brown eyes.

"No, Tige, you can't come with me this morning," Toby told the dog. "Meet me on my way home if you like, but you've got to stay in the yard now." He gave the beagle's head a pat and went whistling along toward Vine Street.

In spite of the fact that Toby would not be seventeen till next month, he felt himself a man of some importance that morning. Shopkeepers and tavern porters, sweeping off their sidewalks, nodded to him with respect and stared after him with curiosity.

As a page at the State House, rubbing elbows daily with the great men who met there as delegates to the Federal Convention, he commanded attention from his neighbors. Back in May, when Mr. William Jackson, appointed Secretary to the Convention, had told his friend Mrs. Wayne of an opening for her son, Toby had thought only of the three dollars he would earn each week. The common people had been indifferent to the gathering then. Congress and Assemblies of one kind or another had been held so often in Philadelphia that this one was scarcely noticed by anyone.

But as days turned to weeks and weeks dragged into months, through that scorching summer of 1787, the doings of the delegates became the chief topic of speculation. From New Hampshire to Georgia, the eyes of citizens were turned toward the State House in the Quaker City.

What was being done under that historic roof, no one seemed to know. From the beginning, a pledge of secrecy had been imposed on the members of the Convention. It

was generally understood that they had met either to patch up the creaking framework of the loose Confederation of States or to form a new central government. Beyond that, all was gossip and guesswork.

Even before the calling of the delegates there had been opposition to the idea of any change. Now, fanned by wild rumors, the Antifederalist sentiment had grown to a dangerous flame that threatened to sweep the whole Atlantic seaboard.

Toby had heard those rumors, whispered by merchants over their coffee or shouted by red-faced rabble-rousers in the alehouses. He knew how far they were from the truth, but it was surprising how many people believed them. The Convention, they said, was planning to sell free Americans back into some form of bondage . . . the sovereign states were to be abolished, their boundaries wiped out . . . the Bishop of Osnaburg, second son of George III, had been secretly offered the throne of an American monarchy!

It was only the veneration the people bore such men as General Washington and Dr. Franklin—both delegates to the Convention—that kept them from open revolt.

As Toby took his way down Second Street, past the stately red brick of Christ Church, he heard quick steps behind him and a voice called his name.

"Toby—oh, Toby Wayne! Wait a bit, can't you? What's the hurry?"

It was his fellow page boy, Ethan Cogswell, who lived in Mulberry Lane, close to the water front.

"I was hoping I'd catch up with you," the stout Ethan



panted. "I heard this morning that Master John Fitch has nearly finished work on his new contraption. You know—the boat that rows itself with steam. Come on—it's moored at the foot of High Street and we've more than an hour before the session opens."

Toby hesitated. He had not forgotten the little package for Mrs. McCosh that he carried in his pocket. Still, a boat propelled by steam was not to be seen every day. And if he didn't take too long about it there would still be time for his errand. After all, the water front was only a couple of squares out of his way.

"Come—what you waiting for?" Ethan urged. "They say it's the strangest sight that ever was seen!"

In another moment the two boys had reached the busy corner of High Street, where the big drays rumbled over cobbles. As they turned down toward the river, they heard yells and the cracking of a whip that sounded like a series of pistol shots. Straining horses came over the brow of the hill, then the swaying canvas top of a Conestoga wagon. It was a load of freight starting its long journey from the Philadelphia docks to Lancaster and the west.

So steep was the pitch from Front Street to the river that the pavement led downward in a series of steps, past the doors of warehouses and ship-chandlers' shops.

"He's got his boat in the little slip just above the cargo dock," Ethan said. "We'll see it in a minute."

If Toby had expected to find a crowd of curious people staring at the new invention, he was disappointed. Two or three urchins sat on the stringpiece of the pier, dangling

bare legs above the ripples. Otherwise the business of the water front went on unnoticed.

At the edge of the slip the boys came to a stop. Below them in the water lay a long, narrow boat, with six upright oars attached to a movable bar on either side. Amidships was a round iron tank above a firebox, and such a jumble of cylinders, wooden rods and gears!

The only person aboard the strange craft was a man in grease-blackened shirt and breeches who worked feverishly over a bolt that joined two hand-forged iron bars. He was tall and lean, with a black beard and deep-set, burning eyes. Wholly intent on his task, he crouched, wrench in hand. They could see his lips moving as he toiled.

"Crazy!" Ethan whispered. "Why—he doesn't even know there's anybody watching him!"

It was apparent after a few moments that they would see nothing startling if they stayed all morning. They recrossed the rutted breadth of Water Street and went up Chestnut.

"I wonder what time it is," Toby said. "I'm supposed to take a parcel down across Dock Creek."

"There's a clockmaker's shop across the street," Ethan answered. "Can you see what his clock says? Looks like ten minutes to nine."

"So it is!" said Toby in consternation. "Well, I can go before supper if the session doesn't last too long."

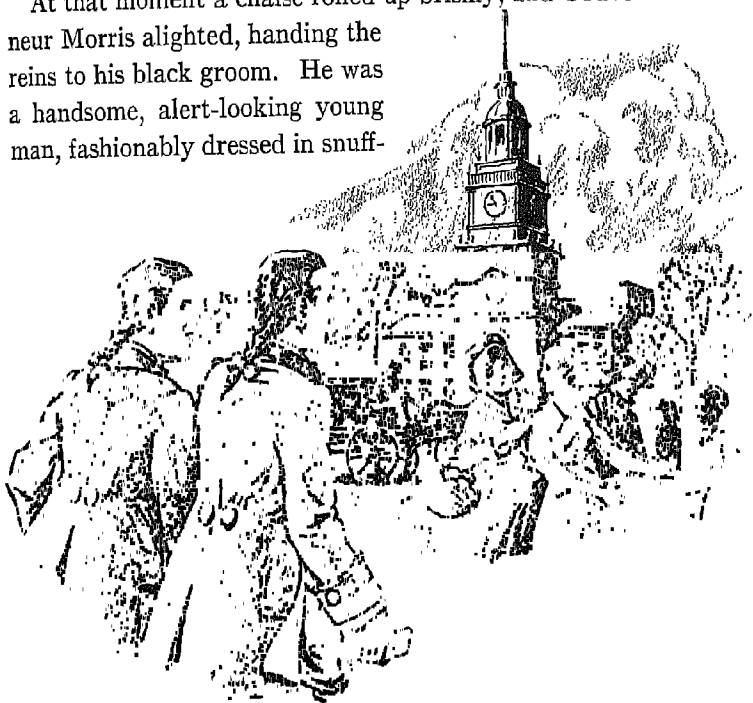
They hurried westward through the morning crowd. Housewives, followed by little negro slaves carrying market baskets, fanned themselves while they bargained with

shopkeepers along the pavement. Soberly dressed Quaker merchants discussed the news of shipping and the price of wool and pepper.

By the State House steps, two soldiers in faded Continental blue stood guard. They were grizzled veterans of the War for Independence. Usually they had a cheerful greeting for the two page boys, but this morning they looked grim and preoccupied. Across the street a little knot of loungers leaned against the wall of a building, and it was on them that the gaze of the guards was fixed.

Toby nudged Ethan. "Look," he whispered. "It's that loud-mouthed Tory, Farrell, and some of his gang of trouble-makers. I hope they mind their own business."

At that moment a chaise rolled up briskly, and Gouverneur Morris alighted, handing the reins to his black groom. He was a handsome, alert-looking young man, fashionably dressed in snuff-



colored satin, with the whitest of ruffles at his throat and wrists.

From the crowd of men opposite came a discontented murmur that swelled to a babel of angry shouts.

"Down with the Federalists!" . . . "We want no puppet kings!" . . . "Give us liberty and state rule!"

The guards leaned on their muskets, stony-faced, and Morris entered the building without a backward glance. Toby and Ethan followed him.

From the central hall a wide doorway opened to the left, and through it they could see half a dozen of the delegates in earnest conversation. The chamber occupied by the Convention was already famous as the scene of the signing of America's Declaration of Independence. It was a beautifully proportioned room, spacious and well-lighted by windows on both sides. Opposite the door was a low platform, on which stood the mahogany table and the great chair used by General Washington during the sessions. And flanking the platform were two fireplaces that now stood dark and empty. The chairs of the members were ranged along the sides and rear of the room, leaving a space next to the secretary's table in the middle of the floor.

The boys hung their hats on the rack outside, and stopped for a word with Sergeant Buff, at his post by the door of the chamber. The sergeant was a magnificent figure of a man, as tall as Washington himself and an old friend of the general's. He had served with the army all the way from Bunker Hill to Yorktown. The bitter winter

of Valley Forge had seamed his weather-beaten face, but no amount of hardship had bowed his broad shoulders.

"Can't say I like the look o' things," he growled in a low voice to Toby. "Long as them curs stick to yappin' from across the street, there'll be no trouble. But there's too many of 'em come to town lately."

The big soldier said no more but snapped to attention as the Virginians, Edmund Randolph and James Madison, came in. It was time for the pages to begin their work.

In the Convention chamber they found William Jackson already busy with the papers on his table. He looked at them over his spectacles without smiling.

"Sharpen the pens, Tobias," he commanded. "You, Ethan, may grind the ink."

Toby picked up a handful of white goose quills and went to a closet, opening off the central hall. He had drawn the pleasanter assignment of the two, and Ethan grumbled as he followed him. Grinding ink was a messy business. Breaking off a few small pieces from a black Chinese ink brick, he put them in a round mortar and proceeded to powder them with a wooden pestle. From time to time he added a little water.

"No matter how careful I am," he complained, "the dirty stuff splashes on my hands!"

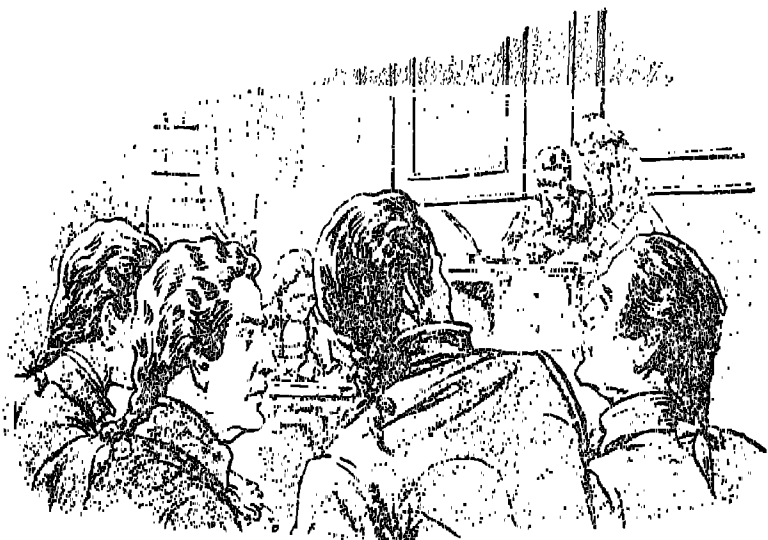
Toby chuckled. "You're in too much of a hurry," he said as he whetted the blade of his knife on his shoe sole and sliced the end off a quill in a clean slant. When the point satisfied him he split it neatly to a depth of half an inch, and laid it aside.

By the time the boys finished their tasks, some thirty of the delegates had taken their seats in the Convention chamber and the session was in progress.

More than two months had passed since he first looked on that scene, but Toby still felt a sense of awe when he tiptoed in. Though no longer dazzled by finding himself in such a distinguished company, his respect had steadily increased. Most of the men in that room bore names that were held in reverence throughout the states.

There was the venerable Dr. Franklin, silver-haired and bowed down by his eighty-one years, a patient listener to the long debates. He spoke seldom, but when he did it was with such simple wisdom that it swayed all his hearers. More than once in those stormy months he had prevented what seemed certain failure. A few kindly words in his weak old voice had halted the threats of opposing factions and brought them back to a sober effort at compromise.

There was Robert Morris, whose financial genius had enabled the impoverished colonies to carry on the long war for freedom; James Wilson, the famous Pennsylvania lawyer; Luther Martin of Maryland, bitter champion of the rights of states; such outstanding New Englanders as Rufus King, Elbridge Gerry, Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth; William Paterson, of New Jersey; Daniel Carroll of Maryland; John Dickinson of Delaware; the aristocratic Virginians, Randolph, Mason and Madison; and that fiery young New Yorker, Alexander Hamilton, whose whiplash tongue and cold, unanswerable logic were already feared and respected by his opponents.



Above them all, in his raised chair on the platform, loomed the rugged figure of General Washington. No man in all the young nation was so universally beloved or so completely trusted. The big Virginian sat quiet for the most part. Except when he called the sessions to order or recognized a speaker, he took little share in the discussion. But whenever Toby looked at that wise, determined face, so deeply lined by care, he felt a quickening of the pulse.

This morning a queer feeling of excitement was in the air. Toby could sense it in the sober faces of the delegates and catch a hint of tenseness in their lowered voices. The Convention had been adjourned for more than a week while the Committee on Detail worked over the articles already agreed upon. The presence of Hamilton, who had attended only rarely since the early days of July, showed that something of importance must be afoot.-

On the secretary's desk Toby saw a stack of printed paper, held down by an inkwell. William Jackson motioned to him. "The doors, Tobias," he ordered.

Toby closed the heavy white doors as silently as he was able and stood with his back against them. John Rutledge, of South Carolina, had risen and was addressing the Chair.

"Mr. President," his pleasant southern voice drawled, "and Gentlemen of the Convention, the Committee on Detail is ready to repo't. Our draft of the articles is finished, and so that you-all may consider them more easily we have had them printed on these broadsides."

He pointed toward the papers on Jackson's table while a buzz of whispers went from chair to chair. "I can see," he went on, "that you gentlemen are surprised at this, in view of the pledge of secrecy we have all taken. But rest your minds. The printer is a trusted man—trained in Dr. Franklin's own shop. Only forty copies of the broadsides were struck off. They are all here in this room, and the type has been broken up. I suggest, Mr. Secretary, that the pages distribute these papers."

Toby and Ethan each took an armful of the broadsides and started to pass them out. They were huge sheets of snowy rag paper, still damp and fragrant with printer's ink. Those which were left over after the distribution were carefully returned to Jackson's guardianship.

Toby did not know that he had been holding in his hand the first crude draft of one of the greatest documents in history, the Constitution of the United States.



For a while there was no sound but the rustle of paper and the sleepy drone of a fly on the windowpane. Then Article I was read aloud by William Jackson in his flat, precise monotone. As he finished, Alexander Hamilton rose to his feet.

Politely, the young man apologized for his absence at the time when the paragraphs just read had been voted upon. Then, his lean face lighting like a dark flame, he scored his fellow-Federalists for their weakness in giving all the states equal representation in the Senate. He spoke with cutting clarity. Before his argument was finished, half a dozen choleric gentlemen from the smaller states were clamoring for recognition.

Luther Martin gained the floor, and his torrid reply recalled to Toby the bitter scenes he had witnessed in July, when it seemed that the Convention would surely be wrecked on this same obstacle. At last the young Virginian, James Madison, rose.

His face looked pale, and after the booming anger of the Maryland man, his voice was quiet but vibrant with earnestness.

"Gentlemen," he began, "—and I must address myself in particular to the honorable delegate from New York— if our action in agreeing to the present plan for Senate representation needs a defense, it is this. There comes a time when the truest patriotism lies in compromise. No man can hold more firmly than myself to the ideal of a central government based on the will of the whole people. Yet I would be the last to deny that the gentlemen who de-

fend the sovereignty of states are as sincere in their own beliefs as I in mine.

"We came to see, in the course of our discussions, that our views were unalterably opposed—that, carried to an ultimate conclusion, they must result in a breaking off of these deliberations. And I do not need to tell you that in such a case, the country would be thrown into a chaos as no American can bear to contemplate.

"At last, realizing that no single man can be perfect in judgment, we accepted the opinions of our opponents with some degree of tolerance and reached a middle ground. We have planned a House of Representatives elected according to population, and a Senate in which the states, great and small, shall have equality. If this be called weakness, I submit that it is better than failure."

There was applause from all the members as Madison resumed his seat. Even Hamilton seemed impressed. When the gathering adjourned until afternoon, he took Madison's arm and went out with him, talking earnestly.

Toby, still under the spell of the Virginian's words, made his way down Chestnut Street and along Fifth, in the direction of a little shop where he could buy bread and cheese for twopence. He was just about to mount the worn stone step that led into the shop when he became aware of three men approaching along the pavement. Two of them were brawny and bearded—sailors by their dress. The third he recognized as Jake Farrell, the Tory trouble-maker.

He was a lean, tall fellow in a dusty coat that was too short in the sleeves. He had the wide, loose mouth of a

demagogue, and his small eyes were cunning and shifty.

Toby ducked inside the doorway. Looking out through the dusty glass of the window he could see the trio staring after him. Farrell nudged one of his companions and half stopped. Then they moved on again out of sight.

The boy had an uneasy feeling that he had been the subject of their conversation. The shopkeeper cut him two thick slices of crusty bread and a generous slab of cheese. In payment Toby laid down a silver shilling which was bitten, rung on the counter, examined for a plug or a clipped edge, and finally changed for a handful of coppers. Carrying his luncheon, Toby went out into the noon sun.

The Tories were nowhere in sight. Slipping across Fifth Street to the shade of a narrow alley, he sat down on the curb and ate his meal in peace. He considered taking the rest of the noon hour to visit Mrs. McCosh, but it would mean running most of the distance, and the day was too hot for that. No—he would start immediately after the close of the session.

He tossed the last crumbs of food to a hungry-looking pigeon, drank his fill of cool water at the pump that stood near the State House, and returned to his duties.

Nothing of special moment took place in the afternoon session. The discussion of various articles in the proposed Constitution went on, interrupted only by a sudden thunder shower that rattled the windows of the building and drenched the broad flagstones with cooling rain. For a time it grew so dark that the pages had to bring tapers and

light the candles in the great glass chandelier. The storm did not last long, however. By a little after four, when the delegates adjourned, the sun was shining brightly again.

Toby hurried through his work of picking up the chamber and straightening the chairs. He saw William Jackson lock the printed broadsides in an iron box and turn the key over to Sergeant Buff. When the final task was done Toby left the building, and making sure his parcel was safe in his pocket, set forth at once for the little brick house beyond Dock Creek.

He wondered, as he hastened down Chestnut Street, what Tiger would think when he failed to be at their rendezvous. Hardly a day passed that he did not meet the little hound trotting eagerly downtown to pick up his master. Toby paused when he came to the corner of Second Street, searching the narrow roadway northward as far as his eyes could reach. But there was no sign of Tiger. Turning south he continued on his way.

Below Walnut the houses along the street changed in character. He passed ramshackle buildings of wood, used as sailors' boardinghouses. Small, mean inns and grog-shops gave way to rutted earth, dotted now with puddles from the storm.

Just ahead of him, Toby saw a battered sign swinging above a doorway. It was painted with a crude representation of an antlered deer, colored a dingy blue.

Toby had never noticed the sign before, though he remembered hearing of the "Blue Buck." An old tavern

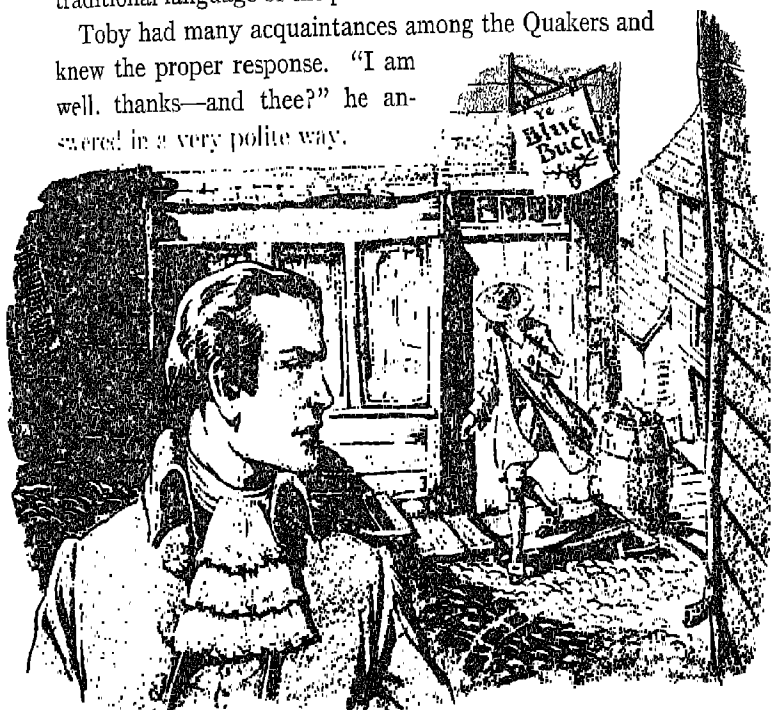
that had seen better days, its reputation was none too savory. Somewhere, Toby thought, he had heard tales of Antifederalist plots hatched under its roof. Instinctively he hurried.

Before he had gone a dozen yards beyond the tavern he heard the click of a latch and the sound of footsteps behind him. A sudden fear brought Toby's heart into his mouth. He was on the point of breaking into a run, but he knew that would be foolish. He was on unfamiliar ground, and someone might take him for a thief.

Hesitantly he turned to look back. What he saw reassured him. The man who was overtaking him in long strides wore the plain gray garb of a Quaker.

"How dost do, friend?" the stranger greeted him in the traditional language of the peaceful sect.

Toby had many acquaintances among the Quakers and knew the proper response. "I am well, thanks—and thee?" he answered in a very polite way.



The man was abreast of him now. His face, which had been half-hidden by the broad-brimmed hat, came suddenly into view. With a gasp, Toby saw that the man who grinned down at him was no Quaker, but Jake Farrell!

Before he could make a move the Tory had him by the shoulder. "Hold easy now, lad," he muttered. "I've a bit of business with you, but it won't take long if you're well-behaved. Let's just step back here to the Blue Buck, where we can talk in private."

There was nothing to do but obey, for the man's fingers held Toby's arm in a grip like steel. They passed through the door into a dark, shabby room. A number of small tables stood about the floor. At one of these, two men sat. They rose when Farrell beckoned, and Toby recognized the bearded faces of the sailormen he had seen at noon. Without a word being spoken, they all trooped through a narrow passageway into a room toward the rear of the house.

A rickety armchair leaned against the wall. "Sit down," ordered Farrell curtly. Toby did as he was told.

"Now," barked his captor, "where's that paper?"

Before he could speak, Toby gulped once or twice. "Paper?" he asked shakily.

"None o' yer tricks, lad," one of the burly seamen growled. "We know all about it. The plan for settin' up a king—'twas all printed out on papers, an' ye've got one in yer pocket. Fetch it out, or we'll make it worse fer ye!"

Toby sat very still. Some measure of coolness had come back to him; he was thinking fast.

Farrell's face looked grim in the half light. "Where is

it?" he snapped. "You know what we mean—the paper with the new Constitution printed on it. Come—let's have it!"

"I guess," said Toby quietly, "there must be some mistake. I've got no paper of that sort."

The more talkative of the two sailors jerked out an oath. "Search the young lubber!" he snarled. "By the great hook block, he's lyin'! I seen him put it in his pocket when he come out o' the State House!"

It did no good for Toby to protest. They seized his wrists and hauled him to his feet. With rough hands the two seamen rifled his pockets and tore open his shirt.

"Here!" cried one of them triumphantly, and held up the little parcel of dress-trimmings.

"That isn't—that's my mother's—" Toby tried to explain, but Farrell was busy tearing it open.

"Buttons!" he snorted, and flung the paper and its contents on the floor.

"Looks like he ain't got it, after all," grumbled the sailor sheepishly. "That packet must ha' been what I seen. What say, Jake? Turn him loose?"

Farrell felt his bristly jaw with thumb and forefinger. A crafty gleam had come into his eyes. "Not yet, Tom," he said softly. "I've got a better plan. Listen, boy. You've had schooling. Read and write, eh?"

Toby nodded, wondering what was coming.

"Maybe you got a look at that constitution paper. Maybe you could remember some of it—if you was persuaded."

There was a growl of delight from the other men. "That's the stuff, Jake! . . . We'll get it out of him!"

Sudden anger stiffened Toby's spine. "I wouldn't tell you," he flashed out, "—not if you were to kill me!"

"Ho-ho!" the fellow called Tom roared. "We won't kill ye! There's better ways than that!"

"Shut up," Farrell told him. "I'll handle this."

A cruel grin twisted his loose mouth. Deliberately he took off his Quaker coat and laid it on a chair. A slow step brought him closer to Toby. Then, before the boy could duck, a heavy fist swung against his eye. He staggered backward, vainly lifting his arms to shield himself, and collapsed against the wall. The blow had dazed him so that when he was jerked to his feet again he could hardly keep his balance. He saw the room and the three men swimming in a red mist.

As if from a long way off, he heard Farrell's cool voice. "Want some more of it? Or will you talk now?"

Toby shook his head to clear it. "No," he answered huskily. "I won't talk now—or any time."

Tom, the bearded sailor, seized his arm. "My turn," he told the others. He twisted Toby's wrist till a groan came from between the boy's clenched teeth, but he still shook his head when they asked him if he would talk.

For minutes that seemed like endless years, the torture went on. Toby fainted at last. He slumped on the floor in a motionless heap, his lips still locked tight.

Regaining a glimmer of consciousness, Toby felt himself being half-carried, half-dragged down a flight of dark stairs



and dumped in a small cellar room. Before the door was shut and bolted on the outside, one of his captors, with an ironical laugh, flung in after him a handful of buttons and ribbons, and the paper that had wrapped them.

That was all Toby knew for some time. When he revived once more, twilight had settled over the city. He felt a grateful draft of fresh air blowing on him, and discovered that it came from a small window in the cellar wall. It was an effort to move, but he crawled on hands and knees till he could drag himself up by the rough stone masonry.

The window, four or five feet above the floor, was level with the ground outside. Stout iron bars dashed any hopes of escape Toby might have entertained, but his captors had overlooked the fact that the window lacked glass. He knew, however, that a cry for help would probably not be heard, and that it would surely bring down upon him the wrath of the vicious men who had seized him.

Disheartened, Toby sank down on the mouldy earth of his dungeon. His whole body was bruised and aching. When he put his head in his hands he could feel the sticky wetness of blood still oozing from the cut above his eye. But what worried him was not so much his present state, as dread of what might still be in store. He had ample reason to know that the Tory crew who had captured him would stop at nothing to gain the information they wanted.

In his weakened condition, Toby no longer felt sure of himself; he had a desperate fear that some extremes of agony might force him to tell them what they wanted.

The new form of Federal Government proposed in the Constitution was, he believed with all his soul, the best thing that could happen to the country. Yet he knew that any leak of news at this stage would be twisted by the Tories to prevent its adoption.

Choking back a sob of helplessness, he tried to plan some way of escape. At last his weary brain gave up the struggle and he fell into a troubled sleep.

A faint sound roused him, hours later; a soft whimper, close above his head. For a moment he looked about him, bewildered by the strange surroundings. Then, as the whining sound came again, he scrambled to his feet.

Outside the window in the gray light of early dawn he saw the familiar, squat shape of Tiger. The little hound's tail wagged with such ecstasy that his entire body seemed to weave back and forth. And his wet, black nose and dripping tongue were pushed as far through the grating as they could reach.

"Tige!" the boy whispered. "Keep quiet, now you rascal! Don't bark and let them know you're here!" He put an arm between the bars and hugged the beagle's neck, while the moist tongue licked eagerly at his bruised face.

Toby's heart was full as he thought of the little dog's faithful search. Tiger must have waited a long time at the Second Street corner before he ventured over into forbidden territory and picked up his master's trail. Lucky that the pavement had been damp. Otherwise even the beagle's keen nose must have failed to follow his master's track through the confusing scents of that busy street.

How long had he been there at the window, Toby wondered? Hours, perhaps—waiting for him to wake up.

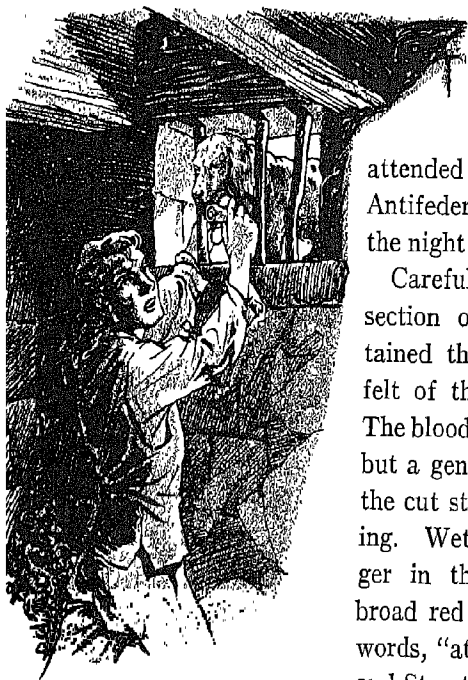
A thought flashed into the captive's mind. He could write a message to his mother—send Tiger home with it! A glance around the bare cellar walls, however, showed him how futile was his idea. Not even a bit of burnt stick to write with. No paper except that crumpled sheet from the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

"Oh, Tige," he thought, mournfully, "if you could only talk!"

Sighing, Toby limped over and started to pick up the remnants of Mrs. McCosh's dressmaking materials. As he did so, his eye chanced to fall on the black type of a column of advertisements, printed on the front page of the *Gazette*. "Indian Queen Tavern," he read, listlessly. "Entertainment of the Best Provided for Both Man and Beast." . . . "Shipment of Cotton Print Goods Arrived from Liverpool, 2s Yd." . . . "Reward for Slave Boy, Answers to the Name of Cassius." . . . "Jamaica Rum of Fine Flavour, from a Cask Freshly Opened, Arrived last Thursday by the Schooner Elsinore, to be Had at the Blue Buck in Second Street——"

With trembling hands Toby picked up the paper and smoothed it out on his knee. Suddenly hope sprang again in his heart. He searched the adjoining columns and sure enough—there was what he wanted! A dispatch from New York, printed in the small type that the *Gazette* always accorded its news items.

"Many grave disorders," he read, "are reported to have



attended the demonstrations of Antifederalists in Broad Street, the night of the 18th July."

Carefully Toby tore out the section of the paper that contained the two items. Then he felt of the wound on his brow. The blood had clotted in the night, but a gentle rub at the corner of the cut started a few drops flowing. Wetting the tip of his finger in the blood, he traced a broad red mark, first around the words, "at the Blue Buck in Second Street,"—then around "Anti-

federalists," in the dispatch.

As soon as it had dried, he rolled the scrap of paper into a small cylinder and took it to the window.

Tiger still stood there patiently waiting.

"Come here, boy," Toby whispered. He chose the narrowest of the pieces of ribbon and tied the precious paper securely to the dog's collar. "Now," he commanded, with as much sternness as he could put into his shaking voice, "go home, Tiger!"

Pointing with his finger, he repeated the order. The beagle's tail stopped wagging. With a sad, reproachful look he turned slowly and jogged off, dejection displayed plainly in every line of his stocky little body. The window opened on a side alley. When at last Toby saw the hound

reach the corner and turn north on Second Street, he drew a deep breath of relief.

It was only then that he began to realize how thirsty and hungry he was. Would Farrell and his henchmen give him a drink, he wondered dully? Or would they try to break down his silence by refusing him even a cup of water? He lay back weakly against the wall of his prison and sank into a half-conscious stupor.

Morning came before anything happened to break the monotony of his solitude. Then the bolt was slid back, and the door swung outward a few inches. In the opening appeared the kinky head and staring white eyeballs of a negro servingman.

"Mornin', white boy," the darky mumbled. "Marse Farrell sez to see if you's still alive. If you is, I's to give you this."

Cautiously the servant set down a rusty pannikin of water and a piece of coarse, dark bread. Then the door was fastened again.

Toby scrambled quickly across the floor. Nothing in his life had ever tasted so refreshing as that first cool swallow of water. He munched the bread to the last crumb, emptied the pannikin, and felt better. Wide awake now, he sat for a while speculating on the possibility of release. Perhaps the Tories had been frightened by some happening in the town. Perhaps they would give up their attempt to get information out of him and let him go. Then there was Tige and the message he carried. Toby felt sure that the dog must have reached home, and he earnestly hoped

that his mother had not been too busy in the shop to notice the paper on the dog's collar. If she read his message correctly he knew she would get help to him soon.

In the midst of these reflections came fresh footsteps toward the cellar. There was no hesitation in the opening of the door this time. The man Toby had heard called "Tom" thrust his heavy shoulders through and stood scowling at him.

"Git up, ye young devil," he growled. "Let's see if ye can walk."

Toby's straight back and set face gave no hint of the sinking of his heart. Returning the sailor's glance scornfully, he waited for what might come. A leering grin broke through the fellow's beard.

"Feelin' spunky again, eh?" he said. "'Twon't take long to knock that out o' ye."

He jerked Toby through the door and pushed him up the rickety stairs. When they emerged on the ground floor, Farrell was sitting in the back room waiting for them. He looked sullen and morose, lolling there unshaven, with a glass of liquor in his hand. A sickish smell of stale beer pervaded the place and added to the queasiness of Toby's stomach.

Farrell took his time about speaking. His cold eyes bored through Toby and made him shiver. "We aim to find out what we're after," he said at length. "And this time it won't take long. I s'pose you're ready to talk?"

Toby shook his head stubbornly. As long as his strength lasted, he would not betray his trust.

"All right, Tom," the leader nodded. "Go see if that poker's hot—red-hot."

Toby swayed on his feet as he heard the words. Behind his shut lips he breathed a desperate prayer for courage. The bearded sailor vanished into another room at the rear of the house—the kitchen, Toby thought. He was gone a long time. Somewhere near, behind a wall, a clock ticked away the slow seconds, and the waiting became almost unbearable.

Outside, a horse trotted past with a clop-clop of hoofs. A momentary light of hope must have shown in Toby's face, for Farrell laughed harshly. "Nobody's going to find you here," he said. "Not till afterwards, anyway!"

But he was wrong. Before he could carry the drink to his lips again, the door flew open and a big man stepped softly in. It was Sergeant Buff. Gasping out a startled oath, the Tory let his glass fall from his fingers with a crash.

"Stay where y'are!" the sergeant's voice boomed. He strode across the room and caught Farrell by the collar. Then he turned to look at Toby.

At the sight of the boy's battered features and torn clothes, the soldier's face hardened. "You swine!" he breathed, and shot his huge fist at the point of Farrell's jaw. Up flew the Tory's feet and he fell heavily against the baseboard.

"Any others?" Buff asked casually.

As if in answer, the burly Tom ran in from the kitchen, a glowing hot poker in his hand. At sight of the sergeant,

he raised it and advanced. Buff backed a step or two, whipped his arm behind him and seized the chair in which Farrell had been sitting. Before his enemy could strike, the hurtling chair crashed against the lifted arm and the poker fell to the floor.

Toby followed Sergeant Buff through the front room, where a scared-looking barkeep and two or three open-mouthed customers watched them go without a word. Outside in the sun, the big soldier looked down at Toby kindly.

"Reckon I know what they wanted from you, sonny. An' I can see they didn't get it. Maybe it's lucky I came when I did, though. A hot iron is a powerful persuader." He tossed the poker into a ditch as he spoke.

Freedom had put new strength in Toby's legs. The day was fresh and sparkling—almost cool after the rain. The sun glinted on the slate roofs and marble steps of the red city. And overhead, against the blue summer sky, pigeons wheeled.

As they reached the corner of Chestnut Street, the sergeant paused, looking down at Toby with a speculative grin. "I know you're anxious to get home," he chuckled, "but if it's your ma you want to see, I b'lieve you'll find her quicker up this way. She was at the State House when I left. Bound to come with me, she was, but Mr. Jackson finally got her out o' the notion."

As they turned up Chestnut Street, Toby cast a rueful look at his dirty hands and torn garments. "I hope the gentlemen of the Convention won't see me this way," he



ventured. "You'll have to hide me till Mother comes."

The tall soldier laughed. "I ain't so sure I can," said he. "The news about you stirred up quite a ruckus. I saw General Washin'ton himself pattin' your dog on the head an' readin' the paper he brought home."

"Good old Tige!" grinned Toby. "So that's how you knew where I was."

"Yes, sir, that's a mighty smart little hound," the sergeant nodded. "Your ma was worried some, I guess, when you didn't come home. She sent word to Jackson by Ethan Cogswell, first thing this mornin'. When the dog got there she was waitin' on a customer, but the little feller made such a fuss she had to let him in. Then he got ahold of her skirt an' pulled till she looked down an' saw what was tied to his collar. The rest was easy to figger out."

They passed the garden of the Norris mansion at the corner of Fifth Street, and neared the State House steps. Toby saw one of the soldiers leave his post and go hurriedly inside. Then in the doorway appeared the plump figure of his mother, still in her white cap and apron. Somewhat to the boy's embarrassment she flew down to meet him and clasped him in her arms before a quickly gathering crowd.

"Oh, Toby!" she cried. "Your head! And your best Sunday breeches! Whatever did they do to you?"

"It's nothing, Mother," he tried to tell her, through the babel of voices around them. "I'll be right as a trivet—soon as I've had a chance to wash."

Looking up, he was abashed to find that several of the Convention delegates had joined the throng. Madison

was there, and James Wilson, and the great Robert Morris. And now the crowd parted to make way for no less a person than Washington himself.

Sergeant Buff saluted his former chief smartly and answered his low-voiced questions. "Beat him somethin' terrible," Toby heard Buff say. "When I got there they were ready to start burnin' him with irons . . . No, sir, never a peep . . . Oh, no trouble to speak of . . . one cleared out, an' I reckon the ringleader may have a cracked jaw."

Washington gave one of his rumbling laughs. He clapped the sergeant on the shoulder and shook Toby's hand heartily. "And this is Mrs. Wayne?" he asked, with a courtly bow. "Your servant, Madam. We are proud of your son."

As the members of the Convention re-entered the State House, William Jackson came bustling to Toby's side. The secretary eyed his page's appearance with evident distress. "Dear me!" he murmured. "Your clothes, Tobias! And your head! Deplorable! I'll have to excuse you from this morning's duties, but you'd best return for the afternoon session. Some of the gentlemen have expressed—er—a desire to see you here."

Toby accompanied his mother home, stopping on the way at an apothecary's shop in High Street to get treatment for his injured head. It seemed that the news of his adventure at the Blue Buck had spread fast. The little doctor who kept the shop was all agog at having an opportunity to serve such an important personage. While

he bathed Toby's face and applied a plaster to the cut above his eye, he kept up a running fire of questions. How many soldiers had taken part in the battle? Was it true that the Antifederalists had made an armed fortress out of the old tavern? Had they set on Sergeant Buff with guns, or merely dirks and cutlasses?

So it went, till Toby would have laughed aloud if he had not been afraid of disturbing the dressings on his wounded head. All the way up Second Street a buzz of conversation followed him. Heads popped out of windows, and people turned to stare as he passed by, so that it became a relief to get indoors and escape from his admirers.

The little house seemed peaceful and pleasant after his experience. Mrs. Wayne insisted that he rest while she brushed and pressed his second-best suit and ironed a fresh shirt. Her indignation at the men who had ruined her son's plum-colored clothes was intense. "Ruffians" and "riff-raff" were among the names she muttered under her breath as she flew about.

At twelve o'clock Toby sat down to a dinner of Philadelphia scrapple, succotash and hot biscuits, and the meal he ate proved that he was well on the way to recovery. By the time the Convention delegates returned from their luncheons at near-by inns, he was back at the State House, busily sharpening quills.

Ethan Cogswell, round-eyed with excitement and curiosity, had news. At the morning session a letter had been read inviting the members of the Convention to visit the river front on a day two weeks later, and witness the trial

run of the new steamboat, constructed by one John Fitch. "They voted to take the day off for it," Ethan explained gleefully. "That means we'll get a holiday, and a chance to see old Crazy Fitch try to make his boat go! But, Toby—tell me how you felt when they brought the hot iron. Weren't you dreadfully scared?"

Weary of answering questions, Toby welcomed the opening of the afternoon's business. He stood in his place by the door through more than two hours of debate, too deeply engrossed in the progress of the great document under discussion to feel tired. It was only when he heard the motion for adjournment that he realized what a weakness was in his legs.

But the session had not yet ended. Young Gouverneur Morris rose and addressed the Chair.

"Mr. President," he bowed, "and Gentlemen of the Convention, I cannot let this occasion pass without a word of recognition for one who is now standing at the back of this room, our page boy, Tobias Wayne." He turned to face Toby.

"He is still a boy in years," Morris went on. "His youth might well serve to excuse him if he had broken the pledge of silence that binds us all. But"—his voice rang out—"a true gentleman's code of honor is not measured by years. This lad has set an example that any member of our Convention can follow with pride.

"The danger he has faced is, I believe, a matter known to all present. And how many of us, in like circumstances, would have borne ourselves as well? There is something

here, gentlemen, for us to consider soberly. Before this great instrument of government is ratified by the separate states, there may be disorders among the people such as we today can hardly conceive. We may find ourselves subjected to threats and slanders—even, it may be, to physical violence. And fear of public disapproval has made weaklings of the bravest and wisest.

“If in time to come any man present may be tempted to desert the Constitution we are here framing, I say let him remember this day! Let him measure his own manhood by the stature of this boy’s courage—his honor—his devotion to a great and worthy cause!”

Toby’s face flushed red with embarrassment as the cheers went up. He felt his knees shaking and put a hand on the back of a chair to steady himself.

Gouverneur Morris was coming toward him now. “Here, lad,” he said kindly, “sit down and rest, for I’ve not done yet.”

He glanced around at his fellow delegates and smiled at Toby. “The members of the Convention,” he continued, “are deeply sensible of the service you have done them and the country. No money can pay for the sufferings you have endured for the sake of the Constitution. But the damage to your person and your raiment can and should be paid for. Some of us here have made up a trifling amount which will at least defray the cost of new clothing. We thank you, lad.”

And with a bow, he laid in Toby’s hand a small leather purse. As the meeting adjourned, each of the delegates in

turn greeted the page warmly. Last to leave was Dr. Benjamin Franklin, supported on the arm of his fellow-Pennsylvanian, James Wilson. The sage beamed on Toby over his steel-bowed spectacles.

"A good day's work, my boy," he said in his weak old voice. "What's more, I doubt not you'll live to see it justified. Under the Constitution we are framing no power on earth can keep this nation from growing great and strong."

Alone with Ethan in the beautiful old room, Toby loosened the strings of the purse and looked inside. Five golden guineas! Enough to buy a new suit, finer than his plum-colored one, and cloth to make his mother a dress besides!

He walked happily down Chestnut Street, his shadow long before him in the slanting sun of afternoon. At the corner of Second, he looked expectantly across. And there beyond the cobbles on the farther side was the small, faithful figure that he sought. Tiger's tail wagged joyfully. Once more things were as they should be. Tiger's doggy mind was at peace. The lord of his little world was coming home on time.

## THE TICKET \*

*Setting: Mr. and Mrs. Autoist are driving down the highway in their new car. They are being followed by an ominous-sounding motorcycle. One person in the car is doing most—in fact, all—of the talking.*

by John C. Emery

Oh-oh, there he comes! I see his spotlight! Yes, and there's his siren! Who? The motorcycle cop, of course. Who'd you think I meant—Santa Claus? I am sure I told you they were patrolling this road! I knew very well we'd get picked up. But oh, no, you knew better, so just because you're tired and in a hurry to get home, you argue me into going fast, and now I'll get a ticket and probably a stiff fine for speeding. Honest, the way you women are always trying to get away with something! If you'd only try to . . .

You can what? Talk him out of it? Not on your life! You'll do nothing of the sort! You've already done enough talking for one evening. Yes, I know all about your big suggestions. The last time you turned 'em loose, on that cop up in Wisconsin, it cost me over fifty dollars! No sir, you keep quiet and let me handle this. Now, I mean it!

Oh, you've really got a swell idea, have you? Well, that's just fine, but you forget it, whatever it is . . . Pull a fainting-spell? Not on your life, you won't! Don't

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you dare . . . I don't care if you can do a dandy swoon. I won't have it, I tell you! Now, you mind, or I'll—Oh, here he is! What's that? Pull to the curb? Who, me? Okay, Officer, okay!

Well, Officer,—heh-heh!—I guess you've got me—I mean I'm afraid I—that is—Be quiet, dear! Honest, Officer, the road's so straight and empty, I didn't realize—Darling, will you please stop pawing me while I'm trying to talk—Huh? Everything's getting black? See here, dear, you know it isn't. And I told you—What? Hold your hand? Now see here, this is no time—Oh, do, please, snap out of it! The idea, raving about how happy we've been together! Huh? What do you mean, just one last kiss? Quit it, I tell you! Hey! Here, now! Stop going limp like that! Come on, sit up! You're just going to make things ten times worse. . . .

Huh? What's that, Officer? Guys like me ought to be in jail? Now, look here, I—What do you mean, you've got a notion to jail me for bullying a little lady when she's sick like that? I was just—Sure, I can see she's—er—fainted, but—Sure, I know she looks like she's got ptomaine poisoning or maybe acute appendicitis, but I tell you—Haven't I got any heart? Certainly I have, but—I am not acting like a dope! I'm just trying—Huh? Follow you? Where to? The police sta—Oh, the—the hospital! Sure, sure, I'll follow you! No, no, no, you don't need to knock a little sense into me first! Yes, yes, I'll step on it! I'll keep up with you! No, I won't try any tricks, Officer! Honest, I won't!



Now then, you little—What? Yes, he's gone on ahead, but you keep your head down like it was. He might look back. Well, I don't care if you are getting a cramp in your back. You asked for it, didn't you? So you stay down out of sight. And move over a little. I need room to drive if I'm going to keep up with this cop. But you just wait till I get you home again! You and your bright ideas!

Well, what are you giggling about? What's so funny? Thrilling? Oh, you think it's thrilling, do you? Sure we're going through town sixty miles an hour behind a police escort, but just wait till we get to that hospital and the cop finds out you were only bluffing and slaps us in jail! You won't think it's so thrilling then. Or anyway, *I* won't. Ten to one, I'll draw about ninety days. . . .

Pessimist? Oh, I am, am I? Well, you don't think that cop is going to like—What do you mean, we can play out the act? If you think for one minute that I'm going to take you in that hospital and tell 'em you—Never! I'll not do it! I—Well, maybe I am a spoil-sport, but I'm no fool! They'd throw us out on our ears in two seconds, and with the cop right there to catch us on the bounce! No sir, you tricked me into this, you and your swell idea!—but I'll get out myself, thanks! I'm going to make a clean breast of it to the cop and take the consequences. Maybe he'll have a heart. Maybe he's got a crazy wife too! Now, here's the hospital, and you keep your face shut or I'll crown——

Huh, Officer? What? What am I waiting for? Why,

I—Get her in the hospital quick? But Officer, she—Of course I'll do what you say, and no arguments, but—Huh? Do I want you to help me carry her? Oh, no, no, n-n-no! You don't need—Huh? You've got to get back to your patrol? You mean you're going? You're actually leaving us? Want you to stay? Oh, no, Officer, no! You go ahead! We'll be all right! There's nothing wrong—That is, I mean she's—er—feeling better now. Oh, thanks, Officer, thanks! I'm sure she will! Huh? See me again sometime? Oh, sure, sure, I hope so, too! Heh-heh! Oh, good night, Officer, good night!

Well, can you beat—He's actually going! He's really gone! I fooled him! Huh? Well, we fooled him, then! We got away with it! *Ssh!* Stop that laughing! He'll hear you! Sure enough, we put it over, and it was just as easy. . . . No! Look! He's coming back! I'll bet he heard—Oh, we shouldn't have tried—I knew we'd never really get away——

Y-y-yes, Officer? You forgot? Forgot what? Oh, to t-tell us what you stopped us for back there. Well, what—My tail-light? It's—it's flickering? Only the tail-light! You really mean that was all you—I'd better what? Get it fixed? Oh, I will, Officer, I will! Right away, Officer, right away! Good night again, Officer! Good night!

Well, I'll be—Darling, I don't know whether to kiss you or kill you! You and your bright ideas! Whew!



## MADNESS IN TRIPLE TIME \*

Stage-struck triplets try to impress a Hollywood movie producer, but they miss a lot of cues!

by Valentine Stojalsky

### CHARACTERS

JOANNE BRENDLE	} triplets	JOE, a sales agent
GERRY BRENDLE		ERNESTO DE VEROS, a movie
JUDY BRENDLE		producer looking for new
MAMA		talent

SCENE: The front room of the Brendle home

TIME: The present

*The action takes place in the front room of the Brendle home. In the center of the back wall is an archway which*

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*leads into the dining room. A door in the right wall leads to the front street, and one in the left wall leads to another part of the house. There is a davenport to the left of center stage and a small table to the right of center stage. On the table are a "runner," several magazines, and a paper knife. There are several pictures of actresses on the walls. The rest of the room may be filled in with chairs and other appropriate pieces of furniture, but the room should not be crowded.*

AT RISE: *Joanne and Gerry are sitting on the davenport, back-to-back, leaning against each other for support. They are looking at movie magazines. They are dressed alike in simple but attractive house dresses and appear to be about sixteen years old.*

GERRY. Aw, what's the use!

JOANNE. (*Looking up*) Well, what now?

GERRY. Oh, it makes me mad when I read about all these people making good in the movies.

JOANNE. (*Sighing*) Yeah, I sure wish we could get to Hollywood.

GERRY. Uh-huh, now take this girl here—Oh, Joanne, take a look at this!

JOANNE. (*Looking over Gerry's shoulder*) Why, what's the matter?

GERRY. Look, look at this picture!

JOANNE. Why—why, that's Kitty Green! We went to grammar school with her. How on earth did she ever get into the movies? Here let me take a better look. (*Takes the magazine from Gerry*) Yep, that's Kitty all right. My, she's getting fat.

GERRY. Yeah, and she certainly isn't good-looking—"Attractive young starlet." Bah!

JOANNE. But how did she ever get to Hollywood?

GERRY. Well, it seems the producer, Ernesto de Veros, saw her in some high school play, and decided to make a screen test. Maybe he thought people would laugh just looking at her.

JOANNE. Well, I guess some people get all the breaks.

JUDY. (*Entering from outside, with suspicious sweetness*) Hello, girls! Who gets all the breaks?

JOANNE. (*With utter disgust*) Kitty Green.

JUDY. (*Casually*) Oh!

GERRY. Yeah, Ernesto de Veros, that new producer, gave her a screen test. Did you ever hear of such a thing?

JUDY. Well, well, I never did like Kitty. Who'd you say gave her the test?

JOANNE. Ernesto de Veros.

JUDY. Ernesto de Veros! Why—why——

GERRY. What's the matter?

JUDY. Oh, nothing, nothing at all.

JOANNE. Judy, what did you mean by that?

JUDY. (*Innocently*) Mean by what?

JOANNE. You know very well what you said. Why were you so surprised?

JUDY. Surprised, Joanne? I don't understand.

GERRY. Ah, Judy, quit stalling. In another minute you'll have us believing that you are as dumb as you look.

JUDY. Yeah?

GERRY. Yeah!

JOANNE. Say, by the way, where have you been?

JUDY. (*Laughing*) Wouldn't you like to know? Maybe I had a date.

JOANNE. Who? Bill, Joe, Robert, Dick——

GERRY. (*Sternly*) Judith Brendle, look me in the eye. Were you out with my boy friend?

JOANNE. (*Teasingly*) Jealous cat.

GERRY. You keep quiet, you don't know what you're talking about. You've never been in love.

JOANNE. (*Hurt*) Oh, no! I've been more in love than you ever have. I couldn't eat for three days.

GERRY. Well, that wasn't love, you had too many gum drops that time.

JOANNE. Oh, yeah? Well, you eat like a horse, and if you think that's normal, you're crazy.

JUDY. (*Turning to go*) You just keep on arguing; don't mind me, girls; I only live here. (*She is out of the room by the time the sentence is finished.*)

GERRY. Hey, where do you think you are going? (*Pulls Judy back in again*) You haven't answered my question yet. Did you have a date with Douglas?

JUDY. (*Playfully*) Now, now you mustn't get personal!

GERRY. (*Approaching her and shaking her finger sternly*) But our code, Judith. Share all secrets, sorrows, and joys!

JUDY. (*Tauntingly*) Oh, is that right!

JOANNE. (*Leaping to her feet*) What! Mutiny? Seize her, amigos, seize her! (*The two girls pounce on Judy who tries to escape through the archway. Gerry stops*

*her with a flying tackle as she runs toward left door.  
They all land on the floor up left.)*

JUDY. (*At the top of her voice*) Help, help! Murderers, assassins! Burglars, robbers, kidnappers, help! Help!

JOANNE. (*Entering into her role superbly*) Quiet, vile traitor. Hold her. Don't let her get away.

GERRY. (*Struggling with Judy*) Tickle her, tickle her. Maybe that will make her talk.

JUDY. (*Kicking her feet, laughing, and struggling*) Oh—ouch—help—don't—don't. Oi—! (*She shrieks and laughs.*)

JOANNE. No, let's sit on her. That always works.

GERRY. That's an idea. (*They both sit down on Judy's back.*)

JOANNE. (*Casually*) Well, Gerry, what do you think of the political situation in the Far East?

JUDY. O-o-o-oh. (*Wriggling*) You're gaining weight, Joanne. Oh, my legs!

GERRY. (*In a conversational tone*) Well to tell the truth, I don't think so much of the East, but—(*Trying to keep her balance*) our prisoner is getting mighty restless. (*Judy pinches her.*) Ow!

MAMA. (*Entering from arch*) Oh, goodness me, what on earth are you doing to your sister?

JOANNE. Making her confess!

MAMA. (*Coming to them down left*) Making her confess! Oh—(*Bending down and looking into her face. Judy closes her eyes and lies perfectly still.*) Oh, she's



fainted! Gerry, Joanne, you've killed her. You've killed your sister! Oh, water, water, quick! I'm going to faint, I'm fainting—Oh——

JOANNE. (*Springing to her mother's side*) Mama, mama!

JUDY. (*Scrambling to her feet, and falling over Gerry who is also trying to get up*) Mama, mama don't faint. I'm all right!

GERRY. Oh, gee—we—I didn't——

MAMA. (*Throwing her arms around Judy*) Oh, my baby.

(*Wiping her eyes*) It's just temperament, artistic temperament. You know, your little mama was a great actress. Oh, yes, she had great talent, great possibili-



ties, but alas, she was too sensitive. (*Sighing*) Oh, me, when I played opposite Bennie Benson in the "Unhappy Maiden," I cried so hard at the end of the second act I had to have a substitute take my place to finish the play.

GERRY. That's how talented you were.

MAMA. Yes. Oh, but when I made my debut—Oh, I'll never forget—I was but a child then. A little babe, only sixteen, you know, and beautiful, oh my, yes.

JOANNE. But mama——

JUDY. Yesterday you said you were twenty.

MAMA. Now darling, you mustn't argue. If I say I was sixteen, I was sixteen. Oh, and can you imagine, little chicks, I had the part of a terrible bad, bad woman.

JOANNE. Oh, mama!

MAMA. Oh, but how I played. Young as I was, I could sense all the tragedy and bitterness of her life. I put my heart and soul into the part. I forgot everything; the stage, the theater, the audience. I lived the part with every fiber of my body. Oh, how I wept when three minutes before the close of the third act I crawled, dying, to the gates of the convent and begged for salvation. And——

JOANNE. And then Bennie came——

GERRY. Dressed as an angel.

JUDY. With a halo and wings.

JOANNE. He never did learn to play the harp, did he?

MAMA. (*Sighing*) No, no, he didn't. Poor Bennie, he was such a nice angel. Ah, but listen to what I tell you. When the curtain fell, a terrible sob broke from the audience. Old men ran into my dressing room, kissing my

hands, congratulating me, tears streaming down their cheeks. The whole stage was covered with flowers. Roses and lilies-of-the-valley. And in my dressing room—(*Beginning to sob*) Baskets—baskets as big as this room—filled with—with—orchids—Oh—oh. (*Breaks down completely.*)

JOANNE. (*Embracing her*) Mama, mama, don't.

GERRY. (*Wailing*) You're breaking our hearts.

MAMA. Oh, but it was so beautiful.

JOANNE. There, there, mama, don't cry. Oh, Gerry, what shall we do?

JUDY. I know, I know what we'll do! (*Promptly sits down on the floor*)

JOANNE. Oh, goody! (*Sits down beside her*)

GERRY. It's about time you told us. (*Sitting down on the other side of Judy.*)

MAMA. What are you doing, girls?

JOANNE. Hush—Judy is going to confess.

MAMA. But must you sit on the floor?

JUDY. (*Very matter-of-factly*) Well, I met a girl I knew and went to have tea at her place and——

JOANNE. (*Eagerly*) And—and what?

JUDY. And there, I met—(*Jumping to her feet*) Ernesto de Veros! (*Talking very rapidly*) He's an old friend of theirs and he's coming here to dinner!

MAMA. Oh, oh, he's coming here, tonight!

JOANNE. (*Sitting limp and stupefied*) Ernesto de Veros—Ernesto de—(*Leaping to her feet*) Gerry, Gerry, Ernesto de Veros, did you hear?

GERRY. Oh, my! Oh, my! (*Jumping up and throwing her arms around Joanne*) Mama, Mama! (*Joanne and Gerry hug each other.*)

MAMA. Come, come, Judy, darling. Let me hug you. Let me hug all of you, my little ones. Oh, my, my I'm thrilled! But oh, what shall I do? What shall I serve for dinner?

JUDY. Gee, I didn't think of that! .

GERRY. Do you ever think?

JUDY. No, I take after you.

MAMA. Girls, girls, hush, don't make so much noise; I must think.

JOANNE. Oh, mama, you can make that Russian cabbage soup!

JUDY. Cabbage soup for a Spaniard!

GERRY. Well, why not, it's foreign enough; and besides I like it!

MAMA. Wait, wait, I know. Garlic, we must have garlic.

JOANNE. Put it in the soup.

MAMA. Why of course! Cabbage soup with sour cream and garlic. Oh, that will be delicious!

JUDY. But you must have something else. The man will starve. And what if he doesn't like your invention?

MAMA. Oh, he will. He must like it. I know Bennie did!

JUDY. Well, maybe you could have some real, long, skinny spaghetti.

GERRY. Yes, and mix it up with a lot of red pepper, so that it will be real Spanish-like.

JOANNE. Yes, and add a little onion and garlic, too.

MAMA. Oh, how wonderful! What clever little girls I have! I'm sure Mr. de Veros will enjoy our dinner. Oh, and I know what!

JOANNE. What?

MAMA. That wine, that wine I use for my nerves. Why the bottle is almost full; I got a new one the other day. We can use that!

JUDY. Oh, mama!

JOANNE. But the dessert. We have no dessert.

MAMA. Oh, we can open a can of peaches. Men always like peaches.

JUDY. (*Hugging mama*) Oh, darling, we are so happy!

MAMA. Yes, yes, my precious ones—Oh, but I must go. I must change; I must get dinner ready. Oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear. (*Hurries off*)

JUDY. (*Calling after her*) Don't forget the onions!

JOANNE. (*Hugging Gerry*) Just think! What a break, what a break! Maybe I can do my Juliet for him. (*Breaking loose and turning toward the audience, her hands clasped wistfully*) "O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?"

JUDY. Bravo, bravo, the great Joanne Brendle as the immortal Juliet!

JOANNE. Oh, Judy, isn't it marvelous!

GERRY. Oh, Judy, tell us quick. What's he like? Is he handsome?

JOANNE. How come you met him?

JUDY. Oh, he's touring the country, looking for a hero for his plays. But why this sudden interest?

GERRY. Sudden? My good woman, we've been waiting for this to happen for sixteen years, three months, five days, three hours, and (*Glancing at her wrist watch*) seventeen minutes. So there!

JUDY. So there, what?

JOANNE. Don't be exasperating. You don't have to get so snooty just because you happen to be the first to meet him. I don't care what you say. I'm going to do Juliet for him, and I'll bet he will like it, too.

JUDY. You, and who else, is going to do Juliet?

JOANNE. Why Gerry, of course. She's Romeo.

JUDY. (*Not pleased*) Oh, she is, is she? Well, isn't that nice! I bring Ernesto de Veros here, and you're going to steal the show. Mighty sweet of you girls!

GERRY. What the heck are you talking about? Who's going to steal whose show?

JOANNE. Just as if you had anything worth stealing! Just because you can roll your eyes like Zasu Pitts, you think you're good.

JUDY. Well, you're not so hot yourself. If you ask me, Shakespeare is more out of date than pantaloons and hoop-skirts.

GERRY. Yes, and if you ask me, Joanne, Romeo is not my type. Why I'm Garbo! Everybody says so; even Judy says so. Don't you, Judy?

JOANNE. (*Almost tearfully*) There you go, taking Judy's side again. And I want to do Juliet so badly. You know I can't do it alone, Gerry. Please do Juliet with me.

GERRY. Not a chance. Do you want me to spoil my chances by doing something that isn't suited to me? Pig!

JOANNE. I'm not a pig. If anyone is a pig around here, you certainly are. Besides, I'm the eldest, and you have to do as I say.

JUDY AND GERRY. What! What did you say?

JOANNE. You heard me. I'm older than either of you, you're just a couple of infants, that's what you are.

JUDY. (*Laughing*) She says she is the eldest! Did you ever hear such a joke? Eldest, indeed! Well, how do you know you are?

GERRY. Yes, how do you know?

JOANNE. Mother told me. She knows that I was first because—because—well, she just knows!

JUDY. Well, I know better. Gerry was first. She has a mole on her back.

JOANNE. She wasn't either first. I was!

JUDY. No, you weren't. She was.

GERRY. I was not. I'm the youngest.

JUDY. You're not either. I am.

JOANNE. You're not.

JUDY. (*Screaming*) I am, I am, I am! And besides, I don't want to have anything to do with you. (*Goes out slamming the door*)

JOANNE. She's kinda' mad.

GERRY. Well, I guess there is nothing we can do now but wait.

JOANNE. No, I guess not.

GERRY. Well, why don't you do something? Why don't you sit down?

JOANNE. Well, why don't you?

GERRY. All right. (*Sits on couch center, Joanne crosses and Gerry trips her.*)

(*They pick up magazines and try to appear indifferent; however, it is apparent that they are tense and nervous, ready to fly to the door at the least noise. When one isn't looking, the other glances at the door.*)

JOANNE. Stop looking at the door, you make me nervous.

GERRY. I make you nervous! What about yourself?

JOANNE. Well, what about me. I'm not nervous. I'm not the least bit nervous, not the least bit. Look how steady my hands are. (*Stretches out her hands. They shake visibly. She hides them quickly.*) Well, leave me alone. I'm trying to read.

GERRY. (*She pretends to read, and there is a pause, then she looks up.*) Yes? (*Skeptically*) I guess Judy is still mad.

JOANNE. Yes, I guess she is. Maybe we were kinda' mean to her.

GERRY. Oh, well, it will blow over.

JOANNE. Still it was her own fault; she didn't have to get so stuck up just because she met Ernesto de Veros. After all, we are even more than just sisters.

GERRY. That's right, Joanne. There should be more sharing and cooperation among us. We would be much happier. (*Approaches Joanne*)

JOANNE. You said it. Let's shake.

GERRY. Oh, okay, shake, pal. *(They both stand up and shake hands. A knock is heard on the door. Joanne breaks loose and makes a quick turn to rush to the door, but Gerry trips her. Joanne falls down and Gerry dashing to the door, triumphantly opens it. A handsome young man is standing outside with a brief case in his hands.)*

JOE. Good evening, are you the lady of the house?

GERRY. *(Dragging him in)* Come right in, come right in. We were expecting you.

JOE. Why, that's very nice of you I'm sure—*(Noticing Joanne and hurrying forward to help her)* Oh, my dear young lady, are you hurt?

JOANNE. *(Falling limp into his arms, moaning)*  
"Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou, Romeo?"





JOE. Oh, you're interested in Shakespeare! Well, I have a very fine collection of his works right here in my brief case. If you'll wait just a minute, I'll show you a sample. (*Leaves Joanne still on the floor and takes a small volume from his brief case*) Er, but, young lady, I don't want to be personal but—that is—er—do you always prefer lying on the floor? Don't you——

GERRY. (*Standing behind her, making wild, horrified gestures at Joanne and giving her a kick*) Pst——

JOANNE. (*Stretched full length on the floor, resting her head on her right elbow and moaning*) "Oh, Romeo, Romeo——"

JOE. (*With great concern*) I know it's none of my business, but don't you find it a bit uncomfortable? Don't you think it might be more convenient if you sat on the couch? Of course I'm not insisting, I just thought——

JOANNE. (*Taking advantage of the situation*) "Thus Thisbe ends; Adieu, adieu, adieu——"

GERRY. (*Grabbing Joe by his sleeve and speaking in a stage whisper*) She's having a fit.

JOE. (*Jumping back*) A fit! Did you say she is having a fit?

GERRY. Don't be alarmed. She rarely becomes violent. Won't you sit down?

JOE. Well, really, I haven't much time, but I have a very fine collection of Shakespeare for only——

GERRY. Shh—don't mention Shakespeare, that will make her worse.

JOE. (*More and more uneasy*) Well, well, in that case,

I'll call another day. Good-bye, good-bye. (*Tries to back out*)

GERRY. (*Catching hold of him*) Oh, no, no, I should say not. You're staying for dinner. Sit down, Mr. de Veros, sit down. (*Shoves him into the armchair*)

JOE. (*Cowering in his chair*) I beg your pardon?

GERRY. Oh, didn't I pronounce it right? I know so little Spanish. How would you say it?

JOE. Say what?

GERRY. De Veros.

JOANNE. (*Suddenly getting up*) I've had enough of this, Mr. de Veros. (*Pushes Gerry aside*) I must apologize for my behavior, but it isn't my fault.

JOE. But I——

JOANNE. (*Sighing*) I know you'll understand. All my life I've been longing to meet a person like you. And when you do come, she—(*Points dramatically at Gerry*) she, my own sister, trips me and leaves me sprawling on the floor when you enter. Oh, the agony, the shame of it all.

JOE. But still, I don't understand.

JOANNE. Oh, you will, you will understand. I want to do Juliet so badly. Please let me do Juliet, Mr. de Veros. Just think—she's waiting for him all alone in the quiet of the night, everything is so still. Then she murmurs his name, so softly, so wistfully, so tenderly "Romeo"—(*Takes his hand*)

JOE. Yes, yes, but I really have to go——

GERRY. (*Tragically, wearily clutching her hair*) Don't

go—don't leave me with a crazy sister. (*Turning to Joe*) How's that for a Garbo? But wait, I'll—

JOANNE. Gerry, Gerry, if you don't stop this very instant, I'll slap you so hard you won't know what hit you!

GERRY. Oh, you will, will you! Trying to steal my show, eh? (*Slaps her across the face*)

JOE. Oh!

JOANNE. (*Tries to hit her back, misses. Gerry hides behind the couch. Joanne chases her.*) You just wait till I catch you. I'll skin you alive. I'll take your skin off and make little dresses. I'll poke your eyes out and use them for jewelry. I'll cut you in little pieces and I'll—I'll—(*Leaps around the room after Gerry, screaming wildly*)

GERRY. Help, help! Save me, Mr. de Veros, save me! (*Runs toward him*)

JOE. (*Jumping out of his chair and escaping through the right door in a flash*) Waow! (*Door slams.*) (*Gerry and Joanne both stop instantaneously, and stare bewildered at the door and then at each other.*)

JOANNE. (*Incredulously*) Gerry! He's gone.

GERRY. Why—why so he has.

JOANNE. (*Hopefully*) Maybe he forgot something. Gee, maybe he went to get a contract or something.

GERRY. Well, he sure was in a hurry.

JOANNE. I know! Maybe we frightened him.

GERRY. Don't be dumb.

JOANNE. Who's dumb? If you think you're so smart—

GERRY. Oh, hush. (*Sits down wearily on the davenport*)

I don't want to fight any more. I'm tired!

JOANNE. Yeah, let's not fight. (*Lies down on the floor*)  
(*Suddenly startled*) Gerry, what will mama say!

GERRY. Oh, my Gosh, I didn't think of that. What will  
Judy say!

JOANNE. Well, after all, it isn't our fault. We didn't do  
anything.

GERRY. (*Not so sure*) No-o—He was just tempera-  
mental! Come, let's tell her.

JOANNE. (*Brightening*) That's right, temperamental!  
Come, let's tell her.

GERRY. (*Jumping up and grabbing Joanne's hand.*)  
Hurry, then. (*Running out of the room through the*  
*back arch.*) Maybe she can get him to come back.  
(*When they leave, the front door opens softly and Joe*  
*sticks his head in. He glances about cautiously, then*  
*tiptoes into the room, and starts looking for his brief*  
*case. Judy enters unnoticed from the arch.*)

JOE. (*Suddenly catching sight of Judy who is watching*  
*him in silence. Backing away*) D-don't move, stay  
where you are. (*Judy makes a movement.*) Juliet,  
sweet Juliet, I—I prithee, don't move, just let me get my  
brief case, and then, mysterious, languid Garbo, you can  
be alone, alone. (*Moves carefully across the room*) Be  
still, oh, Juliet, be still, my love.

JUDY. And who do you think you are?

JOE. (*Carrying on bravely*) Hush, it is I, Romeo, that  
speaks. (*Looks around the floor and behind the chair*)  
Yes, I Romeo, your beloved.

JUDY. (*Viciously*) Beloved, my eye! I'm Minnie-ha-ha, the bloodthirsty one. (*Seizing the paper knife and leaping at him with a wild cry*) Minnie-ha-ha, the vicious one! (*Joe, terrified, tries to escape through the door, but Judy intercepts.*) Stop, thief, stop! Help, police! (*Joe escapes her and dashes through the entrance upstage. With a wild whoop, Judy runs after him. It must be apparent that it will be possible for Judy to chase him in a circle through the dining room, kitchen and then into the front room again, entering at left.*)

JOANNE'S VOICE. Hey, what was that noise?

GERRY'S VOICE. It's Judy fooling around again. (*Door bell rings.*) Oh, Joanne, hurry and answer the door. I have to help mama with her costume. And if it's one of those crazy salesmen, we don't want anything.

JOANNE. (*Entering in a hurry from arch*) Gee, I hope it's Mr. de Veros come back. (*Opens the door graciously*) Oh—(*Mr. de Veros, an elderly gentleman, also carrying a brief case, enters.*)

DE VEROS. Good evening, are you——

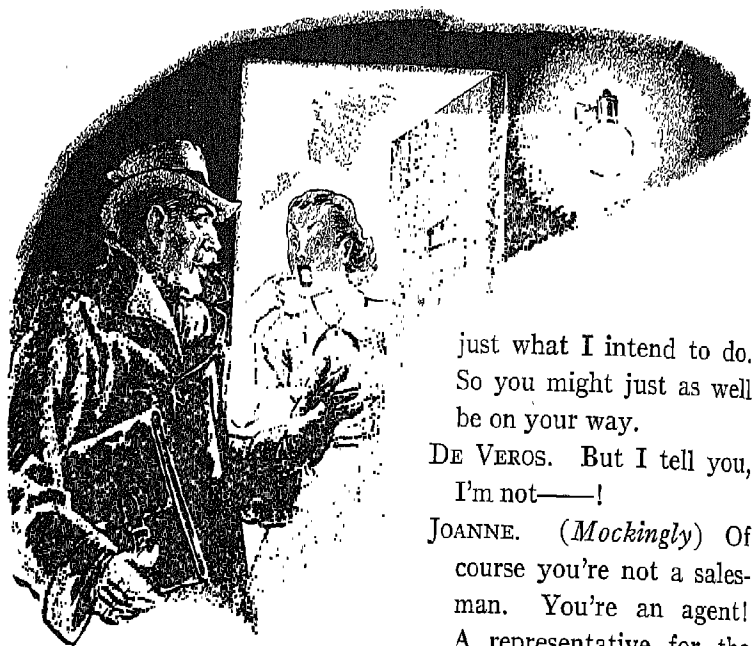
JOANNE. Now listen, we don't need anything, and don't want anything, so you might as well go.

DE VEROS. My dear girl——

JOANNE. And don't get fresh, either. Do you think I'm so dumb that I don't know your line?

DE VEROS. But—but you won't let me explain——

JOANNE. Never mind the explanation. Once you salesmen get started, you never stop. The only thing there is to do, is to talk faster than you, and believe me, that's



just what I intend to do.  
So you might just as well  
be on your way.

DE VEROS. But I tell you,  
I'm not——!

JOANNE. (*Mockingly*) Of  
course you're not a sales-  
man. You're an agent!  
A representative for the

"Watch Your Step" Life Insurance Company. And lis-  
ten, get out and close that door, there is a terrible draft!  
DE VEROS. Young lady, I've had just about enough of  
this.

GERRY. (*Entering*) Well, it's about time. Can't you get  
rid of him, Joanne?

JOANNE. Not yet. I've seen plenty of stubborn ones, but  
this old fellow certainly takes the cake. (*Joe followed  
by Judy, who is still whooping like an Indian, dashes  
through the left door and out again through the arch.  
Joanne and Gerry merely shrug.*)

GERRY. Now, look here, grandpa, why don't you go? We  
know that you're a swell fellow, and you sell the best  
toothbrushes in the United States, but we don't need  
any. And do you know why? We've all got false teeth,

just like you, grandpa. See, now why don't you be sensible and go?

DE VEROS. (*Almost speechless with rage. Dramatically*) Ju-Ju-Judith, I despise you from the bottom of my heart!

GERRY. Did you hear what he said?

JOANNE. Out with him. Throw him out!

(*Gerry and Joanne try to shove him outside, when Joe and Judy again reappear through the door left. On seeing them, Judy stops with a cry, but Joe, too frightened to stop, runs on ahead through the same archway up-stage as before.*)

JUDY. Gerry, Joanne! Stop! What are you doing? That is Mr. de Veros. (*Running to him*) Oh, Mr. de Veros, I'm so glad you came. Won't you come in?

DE VEROS. (*In a reserved manner*) I'm sorry, but I'm just about to depart.

JUDY. (*At loss*) About to depart?

JOANNE. Oh, Mr. de Veros, I'm so sorry——

GERRY. We didn't know——

DE VEROS. (*Losing his self-control*) Never in my life have I been received in such a shameful manner. Insulted, laughed at! False teeth, indeed! Why, my teeth are good for another twenty years. Grandpa! Phoo! (*Turns rapidly toward the door*)

THE GIRLS. Mr. de Veros, please, please, we beg of you.

DE VEROS. (*Flinging the door open, and standing with his back to the girls*) Never!

JUDY. Please, please, don't go.

DE VEROS. (*Still unmoved*) Never! Let this be a lesson to you! Good day!

MAMA. (*Entering in a stage costume*) Why—why Bennie, Bennie, is it you? (*Runs to him*) Bennie, my love!

DE VEROS. (*Turning*) Musette! (*They embrace.*)

MAMA. (*Wiping her eyes*) Oh, Bennie, after all these years.

DE VEROS. Musette—(*Sniffs*) What is this—no, it cannot be—(*Recognition dawns.*) Oh, but it is. Cabbage soup! Musette, cabbage soup, and you as lovely as the day we gave the last performance of the “Unhappy Maiden.”

MAMA. Oh, Bennie, Bennie—it’s been a long time—almost eight years since poor Joseph—died. (*Dries her eyes*)

DE VEROS. Eight years! Poor little woman, how hard it must have been for you.

MAMA. Not hard, Bennie, but lonely. So lonely!

DE VEROS. There, there, Musette, everything will be all right. Remember that part where Herman and Lillian are together?

MAMA. Oh, dear me, yes, I’ll never forget it. (*Entering her role*) Oh, spare me, Herman. Why did you bring me here?

DE VEROS. (*Seizing her fiercely*) I brought you here because I love you, Lillian. You spurned my love, but now you shall be mine. Mine, mine, do you hear!

MAMA. (*Tragically*) Ah, never!

DE VEROS. Yes, forever!

MAMA. Oh, never!



DE VEROS. Forever.

MAMA. Never—never——

*(Joe, thinking that he is still pursued by Judy, half stumbles into the room through left door and falls over the chair.)*

MAMA. Oh, what was that!

DE VEROS. *(Clasping her)* Do not fear. It's but the wild beating of my heart. Oh, Lillian, my little wild, timid flower——

JOE. Hey!

DE VEROS. Look! Look! *(Points at Joe)* By Jove, I've found him, Musette, I've found him!

MAMA. Found who? *(Seeing Joe)* Oh, who's that man?

JUDY. My thief!

GERRY. Romeo!

DE VEROS. My hero. The traditional hero! Wait, wait—I'll make sure. *(Excitedly pulls a tape measure from his pocket and hurries up to Joe)*

JOANNE. What are you going to do?

JOE. *(Trying to break loose)* Let me go!

DE VEROS. Stand still, young man. Here help me, someone. *(As De Veros measures, Joe straightens up, and gradually gains an air of greater self-confidence and assurance.)*

DE VEROS. *(Measuring)* Height, 5 feet, 11 inches and  $\frac{3}{4}$ . Right. Waist, 30 inches and a half. Right. Ankles, stand still, ankles, 10 inches and—Oh, perfect!

MAMA. Oh, Bennie!

DE VEROS. Now then, hold out your hands, palms down.

Right. Now, drop them. Let's see. Turn your head to the right. Right. Now to the left. Just a little higher. Hold it. There. Perfect. Perfect in every respect.

JOE. Say, what do you think I am? A movie star or something?

DE VEROS. Ah, ha—, you will be, young man, you will be. Why, with your looks and your personality—By Jove! It's the greatest thing that's happened in years!

MAMA. Yes, young man, your future is made.

JOE. (*A little doubtfully*) My future—And I'll have money? Real honest to goodness money?

MAMA. Oh, dear me yes. You'll be rich.

THE GIRLS. You'll be a millionaire!

JOE. A—millionaire—Whoopee! I eat!

CURTAIN

## THE MOUNTAINS ARE A LONELY FOLK \*

*by Hamlin Garland*

The mountains are a silent folk;  
They stand afar—alone,  
And the clouds that kiss their brows at night  
Hear neither sigh nor groan.  
Each bears him in his ordered place  
As soldiers do, and bold and high  
They fold their forests round their feet  
And bolster up the sky.

\* By permission of the author.

## LUCKY BREAKS \*

*Are you waiting for a lucky  
break? If so, it might be  
well to change your plans.*

**by James E. West**

Some people put a great deal of faith in what they call "Lucky Breaks." Some of them even think that without an unusual piece of good fortune they will never have a chance to get ahead in life. John D. Rockefeller working for five dollars a week, Henry Ford starting in a power house at eleven dollars a week, Charles M. Schwab clerking in a grocery store—these were boys who "never had a chance." No, they never had a chance handed to them on a silver platter, but they went out on their own initiative and made themselves a chance. They fought against handicaps, they overcame obstacles. They accomplished what they set out to do.

"Lucky Breaks?" Abraham Lincoln was a bankrupt at twenty-two. The only assets he had in the world were his tools, and they were attached for debt. He was defeated again and again before he became President. Alexander Graham Bell was laughed to scorn by all his neighbors for his wild ideas, and the first time he attempted to demonstrate his telephone to a group of scientists it did not work. Robert E. Fulton's first model of his steamship was a complete failure. Madame Curie was pitied by her

\* By courtesy of *Boys' Life*, published by the Boy Scouts of America.

friends because she married a poor young dreamer, with whom she worked year after year in extreme poverty, sacrificing physical comforts and social pleasures for the advancement of science.

Did these people sit around waiting for their luck to break? No, they started to work harder than ever on the basis of their experience and skill and energy and patience. Discouraged? Yes, undoubtedly, but defeat did not down them, and when the "lucky break" came they were ready. But all the lucky breaks in the world could not have lifted them out of their slump. They had to do that themselves.

Yes, "lucky breaks" do help, but no "lucky break" under the sun ever helped the person who was not equipped within himself with the power to take advantage of it.

Don't worry about your "lucky break." Don't sit around now waiting for one to happen. Start out now to make it happen. The girl who will get the "lucky break" in her examinations at the end of this school year is the one who is making an effort to prepare herself now. You can't expect a "break" to do for you what you should do for yourself. The boys and girls who will step into the "swell jobs" and the "soft snaps," if you please, after they graduate from school and college are never going to hold them unless they have equipped themselves during their school days with the skill and the knowledge and the toughness of character that will enable them to make good.

No chances? For the young man or woman who has ability, there are always chances. Thirty-odd years from now, you who read this will be voting for a President; you

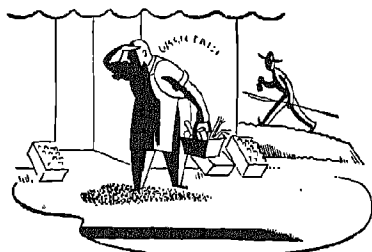
will see in the newspapers the photograph of a great inventor; you will read the message of some man whose vision has brought benefits to thousands of people; you are going to hear about a woman who is at the head of a great hospital, or a great importing business,—a financier who has built up a great industry; you are going to learn of a scientist who has successfully combatted some baffling disease.

Right now these great men and women of the future are young people like you, going to the same type of school, studying the same lessons, perhaps from the same textbooks. Perhaps none of their teachers would single them out as more outstanding than you or thousands of boys and girls like you. What will make the difference? A "lucky break"? Never believe it for a moment! It is what these ambitious young folk are doing now, what they are building within themselves that is going to make that difference thirty years from now. You can't get ahead by sitting back and hoping for a "lucky break." You have to work constantly so as to be ready for it when it comes. There were never so many opportunities ahead for young people as there are right now. It is up to you to make the most of the ones that will come to you.

## ARE YOU HONEST?

### A Self-Test

If you answer these questions truthfully, you can find out whether or not you are honest.

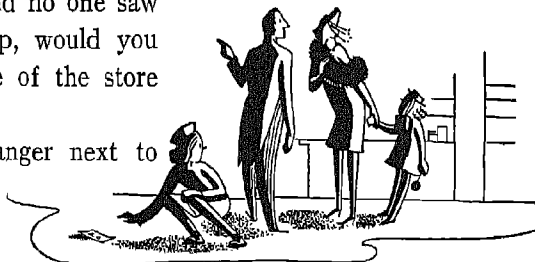


1. If you lost your job because you took time off to go fishing, in applying for a new position would you tell your prospective employer the truth, or let him think you had quit your former job?

2. If you saw a blind man drop his wallet, would you pick it up and hand it to him?

3. If a twenty-dollar bill was on the floor of a department store, and no one saw you pick it up, would you take it to one of the store executives?

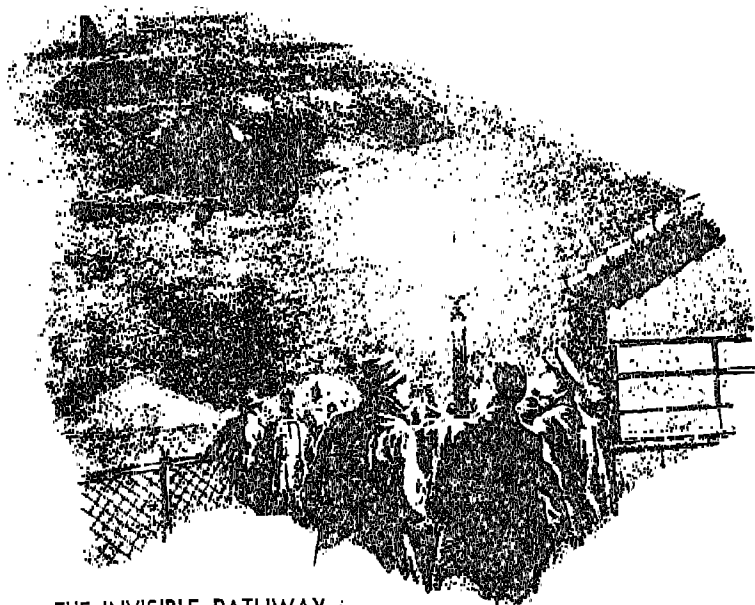
4. If a stranger next to you on a bus dropped a token and



you saw where it went, but he didn't, would you point it out to him?

5. If a clerk gave you change for a five-dollar bill instead of a one-dollar bill, which is all you gave him, and you failed to notice the error until you were three blocks away, would you go back to return the money?





## THE INVISIBLE PATHWAY

*The most heroic actions are not always on the battlefield. Three men deliberately choose a thick night fog for a blind test flight, to make all flying safer!*

by Burr Leyson

Airmarks of aviation—deeds that stir the blood—men who stake their lives, risking their lives that others may follow after them in safety! Not the flaming courage which burns in the heat of battle but the cold peace-time courage of the pioneer blazing the trail! The curtain of Time rolls back and it is April of 1933—aviation history is being written; an airmark is in the making.

A blinding fog covers the eastern seaboard of these

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United States. Road traffic proceeds at a snail's pace, groping its way; trains are behind their schedules; up above the airways are deserted, the planes grounded by their worst enemy, fog. At Newark Airport the fog combines with smoke to form an unbroken veil. "Smog," the Weather Bureau terms the combination.

Suddenly the grounded pilots are electrified by news that spreads around the airport like wildfire. Jim Kinney has taken off from Washington and is flying northward, heading for Newark! Along the route there is neither "ceiling" nor visibility! Here at the airport one can scarcely see to find his way from one hangar to another and yet Kinney is heading for the field, going to attempt a landing when he cannot see the ground! Is the man mad, bent on killing himself? The pilots gather in a group and anxiously wait for the time when they will hear the sound of Kinney's motor and then the crash that seems certain.

A quiet smile plays on Kinney's lips as he swings through the cabin door of the test-plane and takes his seat up front. On his heels follow two other men who for months have been working with him on a system of blind landings by the use of a radio beam.

The three have taken the radio beam and taught it new and strange tricks. They have trained it to their will. They can even make it run along the ground, hovering ten feet above the surface and then suddenly, at command, shoot off its course and strike an upward slant the same as the gliding angle of a plane coming in for a landing!

More, these men have even explored the depths of the invisible pathway they have created. They have designed



an instrument that will show them exactly where they are in this strange path. It will tell them if they are in the center of the beam or not, and that is what they want to know! They have experimented with artificial conditions such as these which exist this day but—they have not yet put their theory to the acid test of actual practice! They have a pathway built that will take them into a field when they cannot see it. But—will it work in actual “blind” flying conditions? Can they travel from Washington to Newark, never see the ground, and yet land safely at their goal? That is what they are going to find out. If they can, they will have conquered one of the greatest dangers of air transportation and opened the way for others to follow in safety. If they can’t . . . well, maybe they can try again, if they are lucky and live through the crash!

“Right?” Kinney asks his companions.

“Give ‘er the gun!” comes the reply and Kinney taxis out onto the fog-bound field. The edge of the field is out of sight, the hangars disappear, they are moving around, heard but unseen. The anxious watchers by the hangars hear the motor roar, the sound moves rapidly away and then rises! Kinney and his two companions are off! They are blazing the trail! The roar of the motor fades into the distance and those on the ground gather in the office to wait word from the other end of the run.

Kinney climbs and watches his instruments. Beyond the windows is nothing but a white vapor. Dimly he can see a part of the struts, drops of moisture streaking their surface. Fine mist covers the windshield in front of him and the windows on either side. He adjusts the head-

phones of the radio to his ears. The beat of the radio beam drones steadily.

Gradually the volume of the radio-beam fades as they bore through the blinding fog. Then another note comes in the 'phones! It grows louder. It is the beam from the transmitter at Hadley Field, New Jersey. They are passing out of the range of the Washington transmitter. They are now over Chester, nearing Philadelphia. Kinney glances at the radio-range indicator which, depending upon the volume of the beam signal, tells very nearly the actual miles from the transmitter. It tells if he is right in his estimation of the distance he has covered. "Chester," he announces to his companions and then resumes his work at the instruments, checking the position of the plane, keeping it in level flight. Still he has caught not the slightest glimpse of ground or sky. The plane roars through the fog, following the invisible pathway of the radio.

He picks up the transmitter at Hadley strongly now. It is roaring in the 'phones. Switching off the beam, he lifts the microphone of his own transmitter and speaks:

"We're over Hadley now and will be in shortly. Better start the bent beam and stand by. How's the ceiling there?" he asks after he has contacted Newark Airport.

"There is no ceiling here! No visibility! Vision is about twenty-five feet on the ground!" comes the response.

"Fine!" Kinney exults and grins. "Stand by! We'll be in there in a few minutes!" Then he resumes his watch.

A man throws a switch in the radio control room at Newark Airport and out in the marshes, directly opposite

the end of a runway, a small transmitter set in a tiny shack begins to hum; its tubes glow. From a peculiar antenna nearby an invisible beam hurtles down the length of the runway, skimming the ground and then, at the very end of the runway, shoots upward at the gliding angle of a landing plane.

Another tiny transmitter at the runway's end begins to send a strong signal vertically. Farther away, twenty-five hundred feet out in the marshes, still another transmitter begins to send up a signal. All is ready for Kinney. Now it rests upon him to bring the plane down safely and show that the impossible can be done. But can it? That is what the anxious pilots wonder as they stare into the dense "smog" and await the sound of Kinney's motor.

Aloft, the steady drone of the radio-beam suddenly stops and silence rules Kinney's earphones. He nods his head, smiles! Good! That is the cone of silence over the transmitter. He is passing directly over the station. In a second he will pick up the signals again. Here they come! Strong now! He swings around in a one hundred and eighty degree turn. The signals fade, disappear then, as he comes back into the beam, they come in again. Once more he is running down the beam into that mysterious "cone of silence" directly over the transmitter where no signals are heard. Here it is! Silence!

Quickly Kinney darts a glance at the instruments and then alters his course. He knows to within yards where he is, for the transmitter is straight below and he has the point marked on his map. He alters his course and starts

for Newark Airport. Now he watches his instruments as a hawk scans the countryside in search of prey. Slowly he drops the ship downward and as he does he switches the radio to another set already tuned to the frequency of that beam which runs along the runway and then up into the air. That is the invisible path he is searching for. Soon, on the present course, he will intercept it.

A faint hum in the earphones! It suddenly roars and then quickly fades out! The landing beam—the “bent” beam! Kinney smiles and swings around. Again the hum and then the roar. But this time he quickly turns the ship and starts to follow the beam. Now is the critical test and three men’s lives hang in the balance!

Kinney’s eyes are glued to an instrument on the dashboard in front of him. It has two needles on its face. One is erect, like the hands of a clock at exactly six o’clock. The other needle runs from where three o’clock would be on the face of a clock across the dial to nine o’clock. These two wavering needles hold the fate of the plane. The upright one shows Kinney his position laterally in the landing beam. The horizontal needle shows him his position vertically in the landing beam. If he can keep the two needles in the form of a cross, bisecting each other, he will travel along the heart of the beam and it will lead him onto the ground, for it swings at its base and parallels the runway some ten feet from its surface! But, can he maintain his position and also control the ship? If he stalls, comes in too fast, too high, too low . . . ?

The needles are crossed. There is a high pitched whine

in the earphones. It goes out as quickly as it came in! The marker beacon twenty-five hundred feet from the end of the runway! His eyes never leave the needles! The upright one moves slowly to the right and the signal in the earphones fades. Quickly he eases on left rudder to bring the ship back into the heart of the beam.

The needle creeps back to upright then passes the point and wavers to the left. Too much correction on the rudder. He presses the right rudder pedal and swings the nose to the right. Now the needle is in position but the other is dipped. Forward goes the stick, bringing down the nose and the needle comes to normal position. He is now riding the heart of the bent beam.

A glance at the altimeter. Scarcely a hundred feet! Airspeed meter shows five miles an hour above normal gliding speed. That's right! Safety measure, that extra speed. There is a loud roar in the earphones, an imperative summons for attention. His ears sing from the blast. It's the marker signal at the end of the runway. The altimeter is down to almost nothing! The airspeed still five miles an hour above normal gliding speed. He cuts the throttle, pulls it all the way back and watches the two needles intently. Now is the time! They are almost on the ground! Will they make it or crack up? Blinding "smog" still enfolds them. They can see nothing but its white veil all around them.

The air speed drops and the ship starts to settle. The needles remain in a cross form. Kinney darts a quick glance out the window. As he does, he feels a gentle jar,

hears the rumble of wheels on earth and at the same time sees the surface of the runway streak along outside. They are down! Down safely! He jams on the brakes and comes to a stop! Fog, the great enemy of aviation, has been defeated! Another milestone in man's progress is set along the highway of scientific advancement! Once more man has dared and won. Another airmark has been written into the story of aviation.

### THE GLOVE AND THE LIONS

*This poem is based on a legendary incident which happened in France, during the reign of Francis I, 1494-1547.*

by Leigh Hunt

King Francis was a hearty king, and loved a royal sport,  
And one day as his lions fought, sat looking on the court;  
The nobles filled the benches, with the ladies by their side,  
And 'mongst them sat the Count de Lorge, with one for  
whom he sighed.

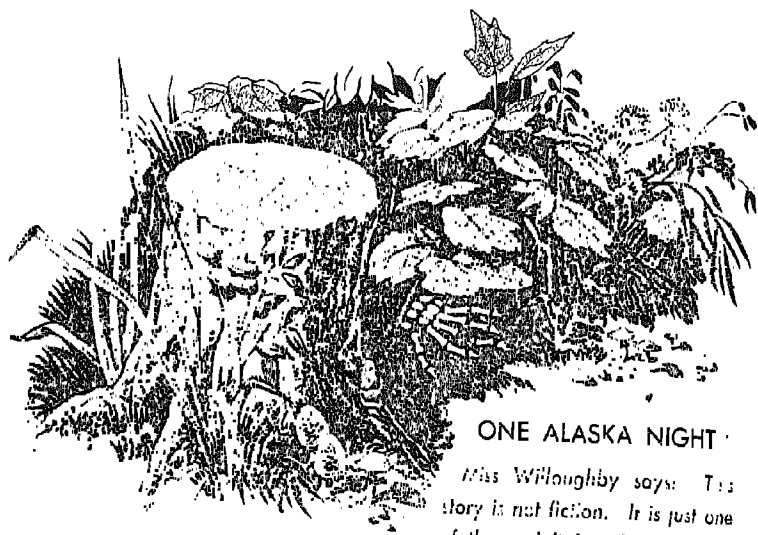
And truly 't was a gallant thing to see that crowning show,  
Valor and love; and a king above; and the royal beasts  
below.

Ramped and roared the lions, with horrid laughing jaws;  
They bit, they glared, gave blows like bears, a wind went  
with their paws;  
With wallowing might and stifled roar they rolled on one  
another,

Till all the pit with sand and mane, was in a thunderous  
smother;  
The bloody foam above the bars came whizzing through  
the air,  
Said Francis then, "Faith, gentlemen, we're better here  
than there."

De Lorge's love o'erheard the King, a beauteous lively  
dame,  
With smiling lips and sharp bright eyes, which always  
seemed the same;  
She thought, the Count, my lover is brave as brave can be;  
He surely would do wondrous things to show his love  
of me;  
"King, ladies, lovers, all look on; the occasion is divine;  
I'll drop my glove, to prove his love; great glory will be  
mine."

She dropped her glove, to prove his love, then looked at  
him and smiled;  
He bowed, and in a moment leaped among the lions wild:  
The leap was quick, return was quick, he has regained his  
place,  
Then threw the glove, but not with love, right in the lady's  
face.  
"By heaven!" said Francis, "rightly done!" and he rose  
from where he sat:  
"No love," quoth he, "but vanity, sets love a task like  
that."



## ONE ALASKA NIGHT

*Miss Willoughby says: This story is not fiction. It is just one of the real little adventures I've had in Alaska, my home country.*

*by Barrett Willoughby*

I clutched at the waist-high ferns and peered anxiously through the gloom of the Alaska forest. I was surrounded by shaggy hemlocks that linked their boughs above every open space. The sundown light was nearly gone, and I had no idea which way to turn. "Lost!" I thought, and in that moment of panic all my strength seemed to run into the ground.

The wise thing would have been to stop right there and build a fire for the night while there was yet light enough to gather wood. But I was alone, unarmed, and afraid. Farther back in some damp clay by a spring I had seen the tracks of an Alaskan brown bear—the largest carnivorous animal that walks the world today. The imprints, from heel to claws measured twice the length of my number

*\*By permission of the author and The American Magazine.*



two and a half boot. I'm not a hunter, I'm not even a brave woman, and no doubt it was my haste to get away from that spot which caused me to lose the trail leading across the peninsula to the fox ranch, my destination.

Now, it was the memory of those tracks that made me determined to get out of the woods. I regained control of myself, decided on a course, and went forward, watching tensely for that breaking away of the timber which foretells an approach to the sea.

Every step but took me deeper into the darkening wilderness. There was no wind. Not a thing moved, except myself. Not a leaf; not a twig. Even the jade-white hanks of deer-moss hung still from hemlock boughs, like the hair of an old woman, long dead.

The very silence began to frighten me. It was a sly, listening stillness, as if, among the trees, some form of life had hushed its action an instant before my coming, to watch, and fall in behind me after I'd passed. I stepped carefully, glancing back over my shoulder. Often I stopped, my heart hammering against my side, to study some moss-grown log, or the thorny arm of a devil's-club which I was sure had been stirring a second before.

Though I never could surprise any movement or hear any sound, terror was slowly growing on me.

Ferns, moss, bushes, all gradually lost their green in a swimming vagueness. I crept on, trying not to make any noise. All at once something far worse than the fear of bears came upon me. I was growing dreadfully aware of a change in the hemlocks. Hemlocks—watchful, somber

witch-trees of the North, holding night under their long, dark arms. . . . I could have sworn that they were moving, slyly closing in around me, watching, waiting for something unhuman to happen. . . . The mystery and cruelty of the woods seeped into that primeval level of my brain where fantastic personalities of childhood tales lie buried. "Leshiy," half-human, moss-covered Thing of the Forest, with ears like a horse and legs like a goat, came alive in the shadows. Leshiy, master of bears, who tricks the wayfarer into losing his trail, and at dusk turns him into a laughing maniac by suddenly peeping from behind a tree, smiling horribly, and beckoning with fingers a foot long.

Then came an awful moment of reality, when I paused to stare at a shadowy clump which I hoped was only bushes looming against a vague knoll ahead. The clump, big as a truck-horse, started toward me. It kept coming, slowly, heavily, swinging a great, low head. Brush rattled under its shambling tread. I smelled the musky odor of bear.

The next instant I had turned from the monster and was running madly through the dim forest. Panic rode me at last.

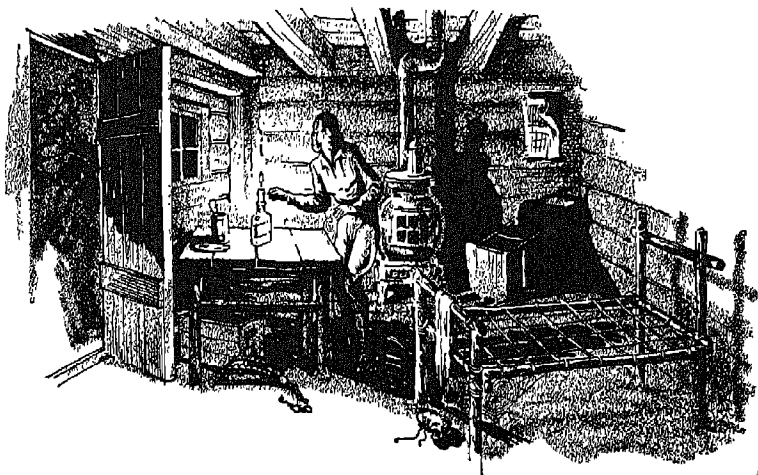
I was nearly exhausted when I burst through the timber and saw the log cabin squatting in the middle of a wild meadow.

I was running toward this shelter with all the speed left in me when, in spite of the terror I felt behind me, my feet began to lag. I stopped and looked fearfully through the dusk.

There was something distinctly unpleasant about that cabin; something sinister in the very quality of the silence that hung over it. It wasn't just that the two boarded windows and the smokeless stovepipe gave it that air of desolation which marks the abandoned human abode in the wilderness. It was rather a feeling—or could it have been a taint?—as if death and decay brooded there. The boarded windows under the eaves stared at me like eye-sockets in a brown and weathered skull.

My recoil was so strong I turned to go back. But a glance at the black forest where the real monster lurked, made me change my mind. Slipping my belt-ax from its sheath, I moved forward through the bear's-weed, my senses nervously alert.

I came upon a stump at the edge of the dooryard, and here again hesitated. My fingers, exploring the stump's broad top, felt a crosshatch of ax marks. A chopping block, I thought, glancing at the pile of dead limbs, firewood, that lay close by.



This evidence of the former occupant's workaday activity heartened me, somehow. I moved on through the bear's-weed overgrowing the yard to the very threshold, and stood studying the closed door. It was a heavy barrier of unplanned planks. In place of a knob, it had a rawhide thong curled into a hard, dry knot.

Obviously, no one had opened this door for many months. Yet, when I gave it a pull, I leaped back, expecting—I don't know what.

Slowly the door swung in, revealing—blackness. I listened intently. There was no sound.

Suddenly impatient at my senseless hesitancy, I struck a match, went inside, and bumped into a crude table in the middle of the floor. On it stood a whisky bottle with the stub of a candle in the neck. I lit the wick.

In one dim corner, a rusty, sheet-iron stove; in another, a stout pole frame laced with strips of bear-skin to make a bunk. A box under the table; on the floor two mink-stretchers and a steel bear trap with a broken jaw. That was all. Nothing here to alarm even the most timid of women. Yet—I continued to feel uneasy.

To steady my nerves I decided to build a fire, and then eat a sandwich. Luckily, I had a couple left over from lunch.

Early that morning I had left town with some fishermen to get first-hand material for a novel I was planning. By the time my notes were complete, the boat had reached the vicinity of a fox ranch where a schoolmate of mine was spending the summer with her father, who owned the

place. I had never been there, and this part of Alaska was strange to me; but the trollers pointed out a trail cutting in from the beach and running ten miles across the peninsula to the ranch. I persuaded them to put me ashore so that I might walk over and make a short visit while they fished. They were to call for me in the evening. No doubt they were now at the ranch wondering where I was.

I wondered about that myself as I raked ashes from the stove. A trail, of course, must lead out from here, and I knew I could find it when the sun came up. But in the meantime I began searching my memory for all I had heard of this region.

The first thing that popped into my mind was the story of five prospectors who, a few years before, had vanished on the peninsula without leaving a trace. Rumor had it that they had met foul play at the hands of a crazy trapper—"Cub Bear" Butler. I didn't know whether the mystery had ever been solved or not. But—a crazy trapper. . . . I glanced back over my shoulder, wishing I hadn't thought about that.

A moment later, ax in hand, I went out to the chopping block to cut some of the dry limbs into stove-lengths.

An unbelievably large, round, blood-gold moon, just topping the hemlocks, threw their long shadows across the meadow.

In nervous haste I chopped an armload of wood, and stooped to pile the sticks on my arm. I was reaching for the last one, fallen off in the bear's-weed, when my groping fingers touched something that sent a chill over me. My

recoil was so violent that all my wood rattled to the ground. Hurriedly I struck a match and leaned forward, holding the flame close to the thing which lay half concealed in the moonlit greenery.

It was a fleshless, skeleton hand, cut off at the wrist.

Horror-stricken, I stared, while tales of wilderness-crazed men raced through my mind. . . . A luckless wretch, slumped beside this stump, legs bound, arms outstretched across the top; a maniac, hairy and gleaming-eyed, whirling an ax——

The match burned my fingers and I dropped it. I was backing away, when my eyes readjusted themselves to the darkness and I made out another set of bony fingers protruding from under a fat leaf of bear's-weed. Then—my brain went into a sickening tail spin—just beyond, a third skeleton hand took shape in the gloom.

I don't know how I nerved myself to make a thorough search of the ground around that ax-marked stump; but I did. Hidden in the bear's-weed that ringed the chopping block I saw twelve skeleton hands, all cut off at the wrist.

Somehow, I got back inside the lighted cabin with an armload of wood, and threw it down. I shoved the door shut and latched it. The fastening was an unusually sturdy bar of wood, one end of which was attached to the middle of the plank door by a peg which allowed it to swing up and down. The other end slipped into a stout wooden stirrup on the log wall. The only way to lift and lower the bar from the outside was by means of the latch-thong. I pulled this through its small hole, grateful that

the door was strong, and that no one could come in unless I lifted the bar.

But—I was hollow with fear. My hands trembled so I could scarcely build the fire. And my mind kept swirling about Cub Bear Butler, the crazy trapper, and the five prospectors who had vanished. The men were last seen on this peninsula when Butler was living in the vicinity running his trap lines. Was it possible that I had stumbled onto Cub Bear's cabin? Could those skeleton hands belong to——?

"But there were only five prospectors," I said, and was startled to find myself speaking aloud. There were six pairs of fleshless hands out there. To whom did the sixth pair belong?

Finally I lay down on the bare bunk, my little ax handy by my side.

I didn't intend to go to sleep; but gradually fatigue began to triumph over nerves. I remember thinking, half-coherently, "If Butler chopped the hands from five men and amputated one of his own, how would he go about cutting off his other hand?"

I didn't know what awakened me, but suddenly I found myself sitting bolt upright, heart pounding, eyes wide open. I knew that some sound had penetrated my sleep.

I was about to get up to light the candle when it came again: *Thump! . . . Thump-thump-thump!* Someone knocking.

I chilled to the pit of my stomach, for the summons, heavy and insistent, was curiously muffled, as if the

nocturnal visitor were rapping, not with firm knuckles, but with—I shoved the horrible thought from me.

“Who—who’s there?” I called unsteadily.

Silence.

Grasping my ax, I eased out of the bunk and, after lighting the candle, inspected the door. It was barred; everything in the dim room was as it had been.

“Who is it?” I demanded more firmly.

The stillness tightened around me. My blood thudded in my eardrums. I knew anyone knocking for admittance at this hour of the night would identify himself—unless he were a——

Again I put from me the thought of a dead man, with no hands. I do not believe in ghosts.

I was trying to convince myself that the knocking had been born of my overwrought nerves when—*Thump!* . . . *Thump-thump-thump!* *Thump!* . . . *Thump-thump-thump!* Twice this time, hollow-loud, seeming to fill the room, yet having that sickening softness—like the fleshy stub of an arm hammering on wood.

Leadens with fright, I managed to reach the door and press my ear against it. “Who—what do you want? Answer me!”

I heard a faint rustling, as of a loose garment brushing against the rough log wall outside. After a dozen seconds had elapsed, I had a sudden, desperate impulse to end the suspense. I lifted the bar, flung open the door, and looked out.

Nothing.



The high moon light-  
ed the clearing with a  
brilliance almost like  
that of day; but there  
was neither movement  
nor sound in the breath-  
less northern night.

Puzzled as well as  
frightened, I went back inside.

No sooner had I dropped the bar in place than it came  
again—*Thump!* . . . *Thump-thump-thump!* . . . In-  
stantly I opened the door.

No one was there.

A flash of anger momentarily banished my fear; I darted  
out and ran all the way round the cabin.

There was no one.

Though I was certain I was the only living thing in the  
clearing, I paused before the open door for a last look.  
The nearest cover was the tall hemlock, fifty feet away.  
Nothing human, no matter how fleet, could have traversed  
that distance in the second between the knock and my al-  
most simultaneous opening of the door.

Only one thing knocks and remains invisible.

I sat on the threshold, my back against the door-jamb,  
and watched the clearing.

Nothing further disturbed me. After a while I fell into  
a heavy sleep.

I woke with a start, hearing laughter and someone call-  
ing my name. Late morning sun flooded the clearing.



Running toward me across the meadow came a slim, blond young woman in breeches and a windbreaker. Lonnie, my friend of the fox ranch. Behind her strode her father, a lean, sourdough Alaskan.

My joy at their appearance was such that I could have rushed upon them and fallen to embrace their knees. But pride kept me from betraying myself to the keen eyes of Dad.

I greeted them cheerfully.

"There, Dad!" said Lonnie, laughing. "You see, she's as cool as a cucumber!" She gave me a hug. "I knew you'd be all right, but Dad had a fit when you failed to show up last night. Sent two of the ranch hands to search the woods to the north and east. As soon as it was daylight, he and I started out in this direction."

"A woman," declared Dad, "should never go into the woods alone. She has no bump of location. She's always getting lost. I was afraid you'd run into bear, but thank heaven you stumbled onto Butler's cabin."

Butler's cabin! A thrill ran through me. But Dad's manner irritated me.

"It's not only women who get lost. How about those five prospectors who disappeared in these woods a few years ago?"

"Oh, those chaps!" He waved their vanishment aside with a confident air. "It's likely they were drowned in the tide rips off the Cape."

"No they weren't, Dad," I said quietly. "They were killed—murdered, right here at Butler's cabin."

Dad began to laugh. "Now, sis, don't try to put over any of your writer's imaginings on an old fellow like me!"

"It's not imagination. I'll show you."

I led the way to the chopping block and, brushing aside the bear's-weed with my foot, one by one revealed the skeleton hands, stark white in the sunlight.

"You see, they're human hands, Dad."

"By George," he muttered. "This does look bad. I mind there was some talk about Cub Bear Butler—but—oh, pshaw!"

He picked up one of the bony things for closer inspection, dangled it in front of him, and then deliberately tossed it back.

"Just like a woman!" he drawled. "Those are not human hands, sister. They're the skeleton paws of cub bears."

I must have looked foolish, for he reached out and patted my shoulder.

"Don't let it take the wind out of your sails that way, my dear. Nine men out of ten would have made the same mistake. The skeleton of a bear's paw, particularly the small bones of a cub's, is almost identical with that of the human hand."

"But why are there no other bones here?"

"Butler, like any other trapper, skinned his bear-catch at the traps in the woods—all except the feet, which demand a great deal of care. He brought the pelts back here to his cabin to skin the paws at his leisure. I bet there are hundreds of bones lying about in the bear's-weed.

Butler trapped only yearling cubs—that's how he got his nickname. But"—he broke off cheerfully—"let's go inside and have a rest before we start back to the ranch."

Feeling very much deflated, I followed him into the cabin. When we were seated, Dad's gaze moved about the dim little room and came to rest on the open door.

"Poor old Cub Bear," he said pityingly. "They finally got him."

"Who got him?" I asked.

"Bears. He was found crumpled down right there—" Dad pointed to a spot just outside the door. "Killed as a bear kills a man. He'd been dead a couple of days. The tracks of a big brownie were visible in the dooryard which wasn't overgrown with bear's-weed then."

"But—why didn't he shoot the beast?"

"Couldn't reach his gun. When they found him, his rifle, his ax, and a fresh cub pelt were all here in the cabin, but the door was barred on the inside, and the latch-thong was broken off."

"The latch-thong broken! How strange."

"Nothing strange about it at all. Cub Bear evidently came in from the trap line with the pelt, dropped it with his rifle on the table, and then went out—for water, likely—shutting the door behind him. Possibly the mother of the cub he'd just killed followed him home, and—well, an angry she-brownie is just about the most gosh-awful critter a man can run up against. When she went for him, of course he ran for his cabin to get his rifle. In his haste he must have jerked the latch-thong so hard it broke off."

Then he couldn't open the door; and he couldn't break it down. The bear must have been so close behind him, he couldn't get away."

"What a terrible and ironic thing!" I stared at the spot outside the open door where the trapper must have stood beating on the planks trying to get in.

"Tough luck, all right. Bert Slocum, one of my ranch hands now, spent a couple of months here afterward, trapping mink. He came out with a tale about Cub Bear's ghost hanging around here, and——"

"Ghost?"

"Yes, so Bert claims." Dad chuckled. "Bert's a case. Biggest liar in the Alaska. He'd be a good one to put in one of your books. The way Bert tells it, Cub Bear——"

*Thump! . . . Thump-thump-thump!* With the door wide open it came. Before I knew it I was on my feet.

"What in heck's the matter with you, sis?" blandly inquired Dad.

I looked from the empty doorway to the calm faces of my companions. "Didn't you hear that?" I demanded.

"Hear what?"

"That knocking."

"Oh, those pesky flying squirrels," drawled Dad. "The country's overrun with 'em. On a moonlight night a man can't get a wink of sleep, the way they play humpty-dumpty on the roof. But, as I was saying, Bert claims——"

"I'd like to see one of those squirrels playing humpty-dumpty," I interrupted.

"No trouble about that, sis. Just stand there inside the door, sort of hid, and keep your eye on that hemlock out in front."

I took up the position indicated, and, sure enough, after a moment a small, furry form soared out from the top of the tree and, with little legs outspread, came gliding down to land with a soft but solid *thump* on the roof. Then quickly, *thump-thump-thump*, it bounded down to the eaves, and off, racing back toward the tree. Its passage through the bear's-weed made a slithering sound, like a loose garment brushing against a rough surface.

"How—er—cunning!" I observed, turning to face my visitors.

As I did so my attention was caught by the door, swung in so that the outside of it was very close to me. Years of Alaska weather, beating rain and wind and snow, alternating with hot summer sun, had worked the rough grain of the unfinished planks into a coarse, light-gray nap. Visible now on the sun-struck surface were curious marks—depressions in the weather nap of the wood. They were even with the top of my head and looked as if they might have been made by pounding fists.

"What odd marks those are on the door," I remarked, my voice very casual.

Dad gave a big laugh. "You must have been pretty scared when you got here last night, sis. Knocking that hard—and on the door of a deserted cabin! . . . But it's time we were toddling, girls!"

A few minutes later, as we were walking away, I fell a

step behind and turned to look back at the cabin in which I had spent the most terrifying night of my life.

I was remembering that two days ago there had been a heavy southeast gale which must have beaten directly on that closed door. Yesterday's sun drying out the planks would undoubtedly have raised the wood-nap, filling in any depressions that might have been in the nap before I reached the place. Yet, marks were there now. Dad thought I had made them.

I looked down at my hands and, though I don't believe in ghosts, I went a bit queer in the pit of my stomach. The marks were there—but I know that my two small fists had never made them.

I had never knocked on the door of that grim, deserted cabin.

## HOW THE GREAT GUEST CAME \*

*Who was the Great Guest? How did He come?*

*by Edwin Markham*

Before the Cathedral in grandeur rose,  
At Ingelburg where the Danube goes;  
Before its forest of silver spires  
Went airily up to the clouds and fires;  
Before the oak had ready a beam,  
While yet the arch was stone and dream—  
There where the altar was later laid,  
Conrad, the cobbler, plied his trade.  
Doubled all day on his busy bench,  
Hard at his cobbling for master and hench,  
He pounded away at a brisk rat-tat,  
Shearing and shaping with pull and pat,  
Hide well hammered and pegs sent home,  
Till the shoe was fit for the Prince of Rome.  
And he sang as the threads went to and fro:  
"Whether 'tis hidden or whether it show,  
Let the work be sound, for the Lord will know."  
Tall was the cobbler, and gray and thin,  
And a full moon shone where the hair had been.  
His eyes peered out, intent and afar,  
As looking beyond the things that are.  
He walked as one who is done with fear,  
Knowing at last that God is near.  
Only the half of him cobbled the shoes:

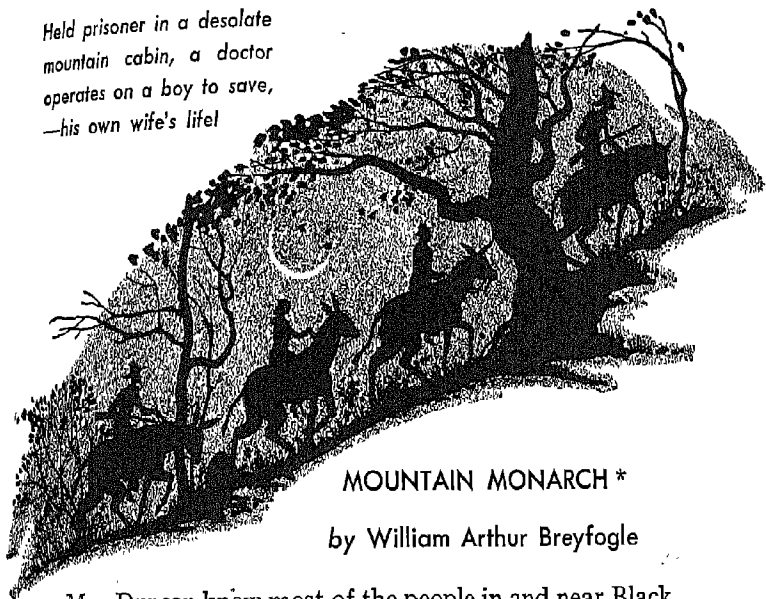
\* By permission of the author.



The rest was away for the heavenly news.  
Indeed, so thin was the mystic screen  
That parted the Unseen from the Seen,  
You could not tell, from the cobbler's theme  
If his dream were truth or his truth were dream.  
It happened one day at the year's white end,  
Two neighbors called on their old-time friend;  
And they found the shop, so meager and mean,  
Made gay with a hundred boughs of green.  
Conrad was stitching with face ashine,  
But suddenly stopped as he twitched a twine:  
"Old friends, good news! At dawn today,  
As the cocks were scaring the night away,  
The Lord appeared in a dream to me,  
And said, 'I am coming your guest to be!'  
So I've been busy with feet astir,  
Strewing the floor with branches of fir.  
The wall is washed and the shelf is shined,  
And over the rafter the holly twined.  
He comes today, and the table is spread  
With milk and honey and wheaten bread."  
His friends went home; and his face grew still  
As he watched for the shadow across the sill.  
He lived all the moments o'er and o'er,  
When the Lord should enter the lowly door—  
The knock, the call, the latch pulled up,  
The lighted face, the offered cup.  
He would wash the feet where the spikes had been;  
He would kiss the hands where the nails went in;  
And then at last he would sit with Him

And break the bread as the day grew dim.  
While the cobbler mused, there passed his pane  
A beggar drenched by the driving rain.  
He called him in from the stony street  
And gave him shoes for his bruised feet.  
The beggar went and there came a crone,  
Her face with wrinkles of sorrow sown.  
A bundle of fagots bowed her back,  
And she was spent with the wrench and rack.  
He gave her his loaf and steadied her load  
As she took her way on the weary road.  
Then came to his door a little child,  
Lost and afraid in the world so wild,  
In the big, dark world. Catching it up,  
He gave it the milk in the waiting cup,  
And led it home to its mother's arms,  
Out of the reach of the world's alarms.  
The day went down in the crimson west  
And with it the hope of the blessed Guest,  
And Conrad sighed as the world turned gray:  
"Why is it, Lord, that your feet delay?  
Did You forget that this was the day?"  
Then soft in the silence a Voice he heard:  
"Lift up your heart, for I kept my word.  
Three times I came to your friendly door;  
Three times my shadow was on your floor.  
I was the beggar with bruised feet; *deix*  
I was the woman you gave to eat;  
I was the child on the homeless street!"

Held prisoner in a desolate  
mountain cabin, a doctor  
operates on a boy to save,  
—his own wife's life!



## MOUNTAIN MONARCH \*

by William Arthur Breyfogle

Mrs. Duncan knew most of the people in and near Black Gap, but the man at the door now was a stranger to her. "The doctor is out," she told him, and practice kept the note of regret in her voice. "If you could come back? Or if you don't mind waiting?"

"I'll wait." He disposed his lean person in one of the rockers on the doctor's porch. "Happen you're his wife?"

"Happen I am!" said Jean, and smiled at him.

"And the nursin' woman? The call's for you, too. There's a man hurt, bad. You're to bring all you need for cuttin' him."

"The doctor won't be long. You didn't tell me where the place is."

"No need, ma'am. I'm to take you. 'Twas Jed Maclaren sent me."

"Jed Maclaren? But that's a long way, isn't it?"

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The man looked at her. "They said you'd come."

"Oh, we'll come, yes!" She thought of questioning him further, and decided against it. The people here weren't easy to talk to, even in Black Gap itself, and this man must have come from the Morlands, the far, blue wall of mountains rising up in the west. Jed Maclaren had his kingdom there. It was enough, anyway, to know that Jed Maclaren wanted the services of Dr. James Duncan and Jean, his wife. Against all likelihood, they had a summons from the King of the Mountains.

It was the title she and Jim had bestowed upon Jed Maclaren, for they had heard plenty of rumors and legends about him. It had been seriously stated in their hearing that he was eight feet tall and a hundred years old; that rattlesnakes bit him and fell dead; that he had nine wives. Like the mountains themselves, Jed Maclaren was an exciting background to life in Black Gap.

When Jim came in from his calls, shortly after midday, they brought the messenger in from the porch to share their hasty lunch. Jim was making plans. "We can take the car as far as White Falls. After that—do we walk?"

"There's three mules waiting there," the man said.

"Three?"

"For you, the nursin' woman and me."

Duncan looked at his wife, in doubt. "It's bound to be a hard trip."

The man said, "I was to say she'd be needed, special." He had stopped eating. He looked concerned.

Jean assured him. "I'm going, of course. They've

asked for me, and I'd want to go, even if they hadn't."

The twenty miles to White Falls were uphill, crooked and rough. Jean rode in the back seat, holding the heavy black bag on her lap. At White Falls they left the car. A man as lank and silent as their guide brought the mules out, saddled. There were not three of them but four, and the fourth was for this new member of their party. He and the guide talked briefly, in low voices, and then they set out, with Jim Duncan and his wife riding in the middle. It was late afternoon. The road ran a little way beyond White Falls, but they didn't take it. They swung to the right and followed a trail that, except where it lay across bare rock, was like a tunnel under thick trees.

"This here," their guide told them, "is all Webster country. Don't make no noise till I tell you you can." It wasn't until then that Jean saw the rifle in his saddle boot. His companion had one, too.

None of the Websters appeared to dispute their passage. But Jed Maclaren had taken no chances with the possibility of their appearance. Other men joined them at intervals along the trail. They were all armed, mounted and silent. When darkness fell, it was cold. Jean Duncan shivered, and Jim took off his jacket and made her put it on. "I should have told you what the nights would be like up here."

"How much farther, Jim?"

"No idea. 'These fellows won't talk. Except that we're not worth it, they might be kidnapping us!"

He laughed, but Jean looked up, startled. "Is that why

there are so many of them—so we can't possibly escape?"

"I doubt it. It's more likely to be on account of their neighbors, the Websters. Evidently they're at odds."

The armed escort wasn't altogether reassuring to think about. For the last two hours of the way, they rode in utter darkness. The pace didn't slacken. Jean was tired, and the mule's gait jerked cruelly at her neck and the small of her back. When she saw the glimmer of lights, a long way off, she hardly dared hope that it marked their journey's end. But after another mile, the mules stopped at last.

The lights, which at a distance had promised brightness, were dim when seen close at hand, and more confusing than unmixed darkness. A small crowd had gathered about them. Beyond the vague, upturned faces, Jean made out the shapes of buildings, of houses, probably. They seemed to be in the middle of a clearing, on fairly level ground. Their escort had dismounted, but she and Jim sat their mules until the messenger of that morning came up to them. "You get down now," he told them. "Light down, and I'll take you in to Jed Maclaren. He's a-waitin' for you."

It was probably her own imagination, but the way he spoke deepened Jean's sense that they were captives. She was grateful that, in the uncertain light, Jim couldn't be sure of the expression on her face. He was already on the ground, and helping her to dismount. "Chin up, girl!" he whispered. "Mustn't keep the king waiting!"

Except for their original guide, the crowd stayed outside.

In the house, lamplight dazzled their eyes at first. Before they could see clearly, a voice from the corner of the room said, "Ye've brought them, have ye?"

The guide said, "Here they be, Jed."

Jed Maclaren, as they saw, blinking, was a tall old man, white-bearded and erect. He waved them to two chairs, evidently homemade, like everything else in the house. Himself, he remained standing. "I've got something to tell ye before ye go to work. I'll speak plain and in few words. There's a man been hurt bad. He's my son, David, my youngest. Ye'll see when ye come to him that it's a ball from a rifle, and I'll tell ye now that a Webster fired it." The voice rose a little, on a note of hostility. "Maybe, in the settlements, a man don't shoot at his neighbor when he looks to do him a harm. Maybe there'd be questions asked, and the Law'd step in. That don't happen with us up here!"

Jim said quietly, "I understand. If you'll let me see the man who's been hurt——"

"Soon enough. There's just one thing more—I want the boy healed and I don't want no deceits worked on him! The nursin' woman, there, she's your wife, they tell me?"

"My wife, yes."

"I told them to see that she came. Ye've heard of a life for a life—that's how it is now, between us. My son's life against this woman's. Heal him, and I'll send ye back the way ye've come. Let him die, and ye go back alone. It's fair that I should tell ye."

Jim Duncan got to his feet. "You seem to think I

have no choice. But I have! I refuse even to see your son, under those conditions."

"It won't save ye. If this woman's to go back alive, ye'll not only see him but heal him, too!"

A cough from the doorway made the doctor turn. Three more of the lean mountain men were standing in the door, near the guide. They stood watching Duncan, with their long rifles in the crooks of their arms. None of them said anything, and the sweat broke out on Duncan's forehead. He said unsteadily, "Is it a way with the Maclarens not to spare women?"

But that didn't move old Jed. "A bold man might not think twice for his own life, but his wife's is another thing. That's why I wanted the nursin' woman here."

He was barely done speaking when a rough door behind him opened and shut again, and a girl came into the room. In the instant while the door was open, the sound of a voice reached them, high-pitched and babbling. Delirium, the doctor told himself, and forgot about that while he stared at the girl. She couldn't be more than seventeen. Her long hair was bound in two plaits, and she was barefoot. Her eyes were dark and wide, and her face looked drawn. She put a hand on Jed McLaren's arm. "Is that the doctor and the nursin' woman?" she asked.

"That's them, Susan."

"Then let them come in. Let them come in right away! He's burnin' up with the fever, and ravin'!"

"I'm only a-tellin' them— You go back in, child, and try to quiet him, till they come." He opened the door and closed it behind her. Then he faced Jim Duncan.





"The time's short," he said, his voice grating harshly. "Ye'll get no better terms from me, and every minute that ye waste is that much more against ye!"

Jim didn't move, but Jean got up. "We can't let a man die because we don't like the way his father treats us," she said, glad that her voice held steady. "Come on, Jim. If we can't save him, we'll worry about the rest of it afterward. Who was that girl?"

Jed Maclaren said, "Susan Hardy. She's David's wife, intended."

"We'll want her to help us," said Jean briskly. "To bring us hot water and anything else we need."

The doctor took a deep breath. Probably Jean was

right. There wasn't any other way. He said, "One other thing—no one is to come into the room until I give him permission. Is that understood? The boy's life may depend on it."

"It's agreeable. But the house is watched, all sides."

Duncan went into the room beyond and closed the door behind him.

David Maclaren had a bullet in his left thigh. The bone was broken, the leg greatly swollen, the wound festered and the heavy slug still inside. Duncan saw, with dull surprise, that he wasn't much more than a boy, the child of his father's old age. After that, he saw him only as a problem in surgery, and Susan Hardy was a girl who handed things to Jean as they were needed. They gave the boy chloroform, and his incoherent mouthings ran out into blessed silence. But the greater part of their relief was forgetfulness, for the time, of their own predicament. They had something to do that absorbed all their attention and all their skill.

The doctor had a piece of luck in finding the bullet at his first probing, getting it out without tearing the flesh very much. The bone, too, showed a clean fracture that could be trusted to knit, once set. But his lips drew straight and thin when he came to clean the wound. It wasn't pretty, and the boy had lost much blood, to make him weaker still. Duncan didn't care to close the wound, since it had to be drained. He couldn't get the splints to suit him, with the wound where it was. But he put the last touches to his work, and stood up. His back ached.

"It will have to do," he said, aloud. "Maybe, when he wakes up, we can tell better."

He didn't properly wake up at all, but passed from the effects of the anesthetic back into fever, with intermittent delirium. At the bedside, watching, Jim Duncan's face was gray with sleeplessness and anxiety. The anxiety, as time passed, was less and less for themselves. Even in delirium, the boy made a wonderfully gallant fight of it, something no doctor could watch without sympathy. There, on the old, hand-hewn bed, was what a doctor understood by drama, adventure. You couldn't go beyond that. It was as far as human courage would take you. Compared with that, what hung over Jean and himself was artificial, unreal, unconvincing. He felt Jean's hand on his shoulder, and put his own hand up to take it. Susan Hardy, for once, was looking at them, not at David. Duncan tried to smile at her, but got no answering smile. Maybe it was Jean she was really looking at.

Jean was worth looking at these days, certainly, and worth listening to. There was time to talk. When they weren't in the sickroom, they had the big loft of the house to themselves. The windows, one at each end, were too small to squeeze through, even if the house hadn't been watched. Sometimes they saw the sentinels pass back and forth, between the house and the edge of the woods. Jim Duncan would have cursed them but his wife made him stop. "That won't help us, my dear. We've done all we can, and in a day or two we'll know what's going to happen to us."

"I shouldn't have let you come. I should have known."

"I wanted to come. And how could you have foreseen all this? We always talked about the King of the Mountains as if he were a sort of joke. But I suppose the old kings *did* act like this, more often than not."

"He's a coward and a cur—no better than a gangster!"

"Don't say that. Maybe it isn't easy for him to have to ask for help. He didn't know any more about us than we knew about him. We were strangers, and that made us enemies."

"Are you excusing him, Jean?"

"Trying to explain him, that's all."

"It comes to the same thing."

"But don't you see that he's really afraid of us? Not for himself—he doesn't look a timid man. But, as he sees it, we've got the boy's life in our hands. How can we tell what that means to him? It's fear that brings out the cruelty in him."

"He isn't the first man to see his son in a doctor's hands. If he thinks he's making sure the boy gets careful treatment, he's a fool."

"But he knows nothing about doctors! It's the first time a doctor's ever been up here."

"How do you know?"

"Susan told me. If they're taken sick, they recover or they die. Either way, they do it alone. You can see what old Jed Maclaren thought of the boy, when he broke what amounts to a tradition, to send for us. It had never been done before. If he hadn't been beside himself with fear and grief, he wouldn't have done it this time. I think we

ought to keep that in mind," was the further explanation.

Her husband exploded. "You don't seem to see that just that fear and grief will be the end of us, if the boy doesn't get better!"

Jean said, "I know. How is he today?"

"No change. I told the girl to call me if he so much as stirred."

"Is the wound——?"

"Healing pretty well. The trouble is, we weren't called in time. In a hospital, a case like that would hardly be worth operating on—too apt to die on the table. It's a wonder he came out from under the chloroform. Everything was against him, even the way his father acted!"

"That wasn't the boy's fault."

"Oh, the boy's all right, though he's started young to get himself shot up. He does his part, and his part is more than mine. That doesn't make it any easier for me! I could stand the waiting better if there were something to do. It's maddening to have everything depend simply on his constitution!"

"You're tired out, Jim. Lie down for a while. I'll talk to you until you fall asleep."

She hadn't expected him to do it, but he stretched out on the bed and closed his eyes. Jean sat beside him, stroking his forehead, murmuring that he mustn't worry, that it would come out all right. At first he answered her, a word or two at a time. Then his breathing grew deeper and he was really asleep. She was still crouching over him when Susan Hardy came into the room. Jean didn't know how long the girl had been there, when she

turned and saw her. Very gently, she moved from her position beside Jim, and crossed to the door. "What is it, Susan?" she whispered.

"He isn't talking so much as he was. I thought I'd best come and tell you."

Should she wake Jim? But it was his first proper sleep in two days, and she could call him quickly if he were needed. "I'll come and see him," she said, and followed the girl down the ladder-like stairs. She was thinking that if David Maclaren had taken a turn for the weaker, this would be the beginning of the end. She had never doubted that old Jed would be as good as his word. If David died, she must die, too. That was what she was there for, to Jed's way of thinking. She was a pledge for his son's safety. If Jim was a bold man, he might disregard a threat to himself. It told you much about Jed Maclaren that he could think of that, and insist on her coming. She hadn't had time for proper fear, what with working over David and trying to keep Jim from despair. But the cause for fear was not less than it had been. She followed Susan into the room where the boy lay. The house, it seemed to her, was very quiet.

She slid the thermometer between David's lips, and took his pulse, while she waited. The pulse was faint, but steady. His temperature stood at just below a hundred and two, scarcely changed. No reason to call him. But when she told Susan, the girl stared at her as if she hadn't heard. "I'll sit here if you like," Jean offered. "You go and get some sleep."

Susan Hardy shook her head. "If you've a mind to it, I'd like to talk with you," she said.

"Why, yes. That would be nice," Jean was surprised.

"I heard what Jed said to you and the doctor, the day you came. Mostly, he gets his own way, up here."

Jean nodded, wondering what was now coming next.

"I was bound to tell you that. I thought you might think it was only talk, the way you acted."

"No, Susan. I knew. But thank you."

"For that? After all you've done? I watched you working on him, and you didn't scamp it. You did more than all of us could do. If David dies now, you've done your best to save him."

Jean said again, "Thank you," and meant it.

"You've no call to thank me!" the girl cried, as if the words had stung her. "You ought to hate us all, with Jed Maclaren meaning to murder you off, when you've done your best! But he ain't going to, not if I can stop him! I've settled on that. It's what I had to tell you. Now listen—tonight I'll show you and the doctor how to creep out and get away. Down the trail a mile, we can get mules, and I'll take you as far as White Falls. It's the least I can do, and I'll do it gladly!"

Her voice was hardly above a whisper, but her breath came fast and her bosom heaved. Jean marveled that the girl's excitement left her unmoved. She was touched, and pleased, but not by the promise of deliverance. She looked down at David Maclaren, on the bed. If they did go, it might mean the difference between life and death to

him. Maybe old Jed had deserved that, but had the boy? On an impulse, she put her arms around Susan, and kissed her. "It's sweet of you, and I'll ask my husband what he thinks. But why do you want to help us escape?"

"It was watching you work over David. Not only that—I liked you soon as I saw you. And the way you and the doctor treat each other—that's the way I always wanted it to be for David and me."

She told Jim when he came down, in the late afternoon. Susan had gone out, and he rubbed his chin and stared at his wife. "Can she do it?"

"I'm quite sure she can."

"If you think so, I want you to go with her, Jean."

"I won't do it!"

"You *will*! There's nothing up here I can't do alone now. The two of you will have a much better chance of getting away than three would have. And you are the only one in danger by staying."

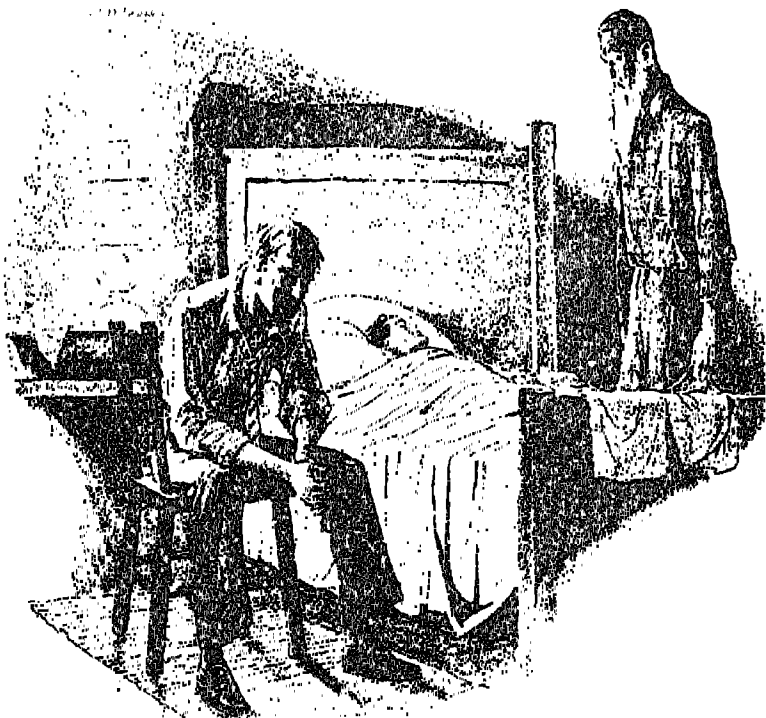
"That isn't true, Jim, and you know it! Do you think Jed Maclaren would let you go free, when he found out what had happened? You know he wouldn't!"

"If I pull the boy through, he will."

"If you can gamble on that, so can I! Don't you see—if he recovers, we're both all right. If he doesn't—well, one of us is in for it, anyway."

His shoulders moved in a gesture of helplessness. He turned toward the bed. "If I could make you go, I would. I hope you'll do it for my sake, if not for your own. Think about that, will you? There's still a little time." Then





he took out a stethoscope and bent over David Maclaren.

As it happened, neither of them thought of it again that evening. Instead, they spent the hard hours fighting a sharp and sudden crisis in the boy's condition. Just at dark, he began tossing and muttering. His fever rose quickly to a hundred and four, and the delirium returned. It was what they had waited for—and dreaded—the flurry that might end in death and might mark the beginning of convalescence. The weight of a hair could turn it either way. Once, looking up, the doctor was startled to see old Jed Maclaren standing at the side of the bed. No one had told him of the change in his son, and it was the first time he had appeared in the sickroom.

He didn't get in anyone's way. He didn't even speak, and Duncan tried to disregard him. It wasn't easy to get that ravaged, stern old face out of his mind, until he turned to the white, young face on the pillow. It hadn't struck him before, but the boy was the image of his father.

His head, when the doctor felt it, was hot and dry. He breathed through open, cracking lips, and so faintly that they could hardly be sure the breathing hadn't stopped. The great weariness invading Jim Duncan was more mental than physical. He found a chair by the bedside and dropped on it. This was the end! He had done his best, and there was nothing more he could do. He felt for the boy's pulse, and found its weak flutter. The wrist was hot. By Duncan's watch, it was nearly two in the morning.

He didn't know how long he had gone on holding the boy's wrist between his fingers, but he noticed, with no particular surprise, that his finger tips were damp. It took a long minute for the meaning of that to dawn upon his tired mind. He put his hand quickly on David's forehead, and it was cooler, wet with sweat. Duncan fumbled clumsily for his thermometer, and thrust it into the boy's mouth. When he read it, his face worked queerly. He caught Jed Maclaren's eye, and then he was laughing. The laughter hurt his stiff cheeks. "The sweat's come, and the fever's broken. Give him quiet now, and he'll mend. Outside, all of you but Susan!"

Of all strange sights Jim Duncan had ever seen, the strangest was the sudden weeping of the old King.

Jed Maclaren hadn't quite finished with them yet. "You're free to go now, and I'll set ye on the way. But first, I'll pay for what ye've done." He took a leather bag from his pocket, small and heavy, and held it out. Duncan knew, without seeing them, that the coins were gold. But he didn't want them.

"I'll remind you that it isn't something you can pay for! That was never mentioned; it wasn't part of the bargain. You were to let us go if we healed the boy. We've done that, and I won't hold you to more than your word."

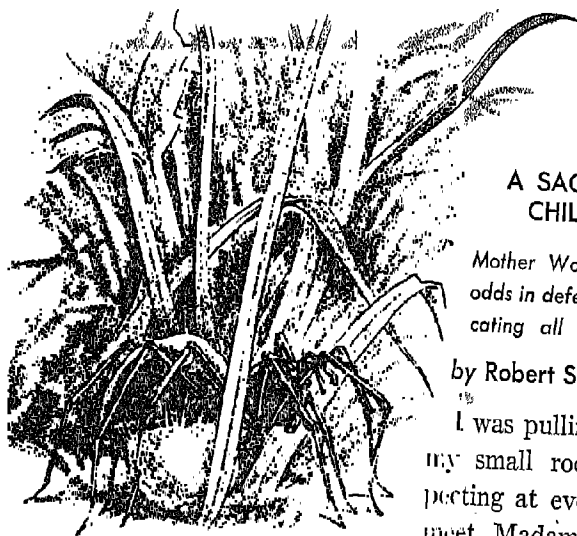
The old man flushed painfully, but Duncan saw no reason to spare him. "It wasn't as if you had left us any choice."

"Aye, but ye had the choice!" said old Jed, and his flush deepened. "Susan told me what she offered, and how ye didn't take it. I've never yet been beholden to any man for a thing like that."

"For that matter, I've never before had a gun held to my head while I worked. Most of my patients trust me to do my best, without that."

"I didn't know ye. The boy looked like dying, and he was my youngest." A note of pleading had crept into the deep voice. "I make ye free of all this country now. It's yourn, without let, if ye take the payment."

Duncan considered. "The money's mine, to do as I like with it? Then I give it to Susan and the boy, for a wedding present." Because old Jed hesitated, he put out his own hand first. Jed Maclaren took it.



## A SACKFUL OF CHILDREN \*

*Mother Wolf Spider faces odds in defending and educating all of her babies.*

*by Robert Sparks Walker*

I was pulling up weeds in my small rock garden, expecting at every moment to meet Madam Wolf Spider.

For the last five years, at just about this season, I had seen a member of her race at this identical spot. The rains had been falling for a week and the weeds were growing so fast that they were making forests for the spider family.

In this same place, I had seen Madam Wolf Spider sunning her round silken bag as if the thing held something precious. I had often watched her fasten the bag on the underside of her abdomen to the silk threads that came from her spinnerets. Then she could travel with ease and comfort and keep a keen lookout with her eight bright eyes for insects, stalk them as a wolf stalks its prey, and at the proper moment, wolflike, leaps on the insects and devours them for dinner.

The sun had not gone down, although the nighthawks were yelping overhead.

When my hand reached a small natural rock shelter, out

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popped Madam Wolf Spider with a big white bundle tied to the rear of her body. She reminded me of an old wash-woman carrying a bundle of soiled clothes tied up in a white sheet. She did not get excited, but halted and seemed to stare at me as if to say, "Why is it that I can't have a little peace around here? Why do you have to poke about and destroy a spider's forest?"

As often as I meet an intelligent creature of this kind, I immediately wish to have it pose for a picture. I ran for a big white wooden board and held it in front of Madam Spider, while I prodded her with a green grass blade. She did not hesitate to walk on the board, but, I think, the white color formed such a marked contrast with her dark body that she scurried off in haste, hauling the egg bag at double-quick time.

This kept me busy shifting the board to prevent her from running off. In spite of my efforts she sometimes jumped onto the grass. The first leap unfastened her egg bag from her abdomen, and she instantly turned around, grabbed the bag with her two handlike palps and carried it as any woman would have done.

I kept turning the board until she became tired of walking. She quickly slipped the bag beneath her body and in a moment had the thing fastened again to her spinnerets. Now she was free to travel faster and more comfortably.

But then she took another leap from the board—and again the heavy bag broke loose and rolled off. Before she could turn and pick it up, I grabbed the bag in my two fingers. She searched in vain for her treasure—the most

priceless possession of any mother wolf spider. The bag was heavy and plump. I was not certain, but I thought that the young spiders were already hatched out and were of good size, judging from the tight covering. I knew that she had about one hundred and fifty or possibly more young spiders in the bag—and that soon they would have to be let out of the receptacle. Perhaps, if my sense of hearing had been keen enough—and if I could have understood spider language—I might have heard some whispering conversations going on inside!

"Where are my children?" the old wolf spider seemed to plead. When I laid the egg bag back down, she rushed up and grabbed it and held it so securely that I could not have wrested it from her easily. Really, I was anxious for her to fasten the bag to her abdomen again, so that I might take a picture of her carrying it in a normal fashion. No sir; she was not going to take any more risks. She had eight good legs besides the two short hands, and if her bag had not been so heavy, I am sure she would have galloped away and made her escape.

After the picture had been snapped with her holding the bag in her two palps, I let her get off the white board at the small rock shelter where I first found her. I was sure that in a few days she would be biting a hole in the bag to let the young out.

A week went by, and I went to pay another visit to Madam Wolf Spider. When I stirred the earth about the spot she hopped out, but there was no plump egg bag this time. If my neighbors had been watching, I fear they

would have thought I had suddenly gone crazy, because what I saw was so amusing that I laughed aloud. The old egg bag lay, flimsy and empty, on the ground, and as Madam Spider hopped off, she must have had more than 150 long-legged children riding on her back.

She had simply gnawed a hole in the bag and let the scores of little spiders crawl out. Now, as she walked through the grass and leaped upon first one insect and then another, Madam Spider was teaching her children the art of the chase. When she had thus taught them how to make a living, she would force them to get down and assume all the responsibilities of earning a livelihood—or starve.

Now, I wanted Madam Spider to pose for a second picture. She was so dark colored that I had to go for the white wooden board again so her body would show up. She had such a heavy load on her back she had to proceed on foot with caution or else risk shaking some of her children off in the grass.

She did not get excited, at first, in traveling over the board. However, when she walked across it, a half dozen spider children jumped off onto the board to investigate it, as if impelled by the curiosity of a normal human youngster. Their curiosity satisfied, they scurried back and each one climbed one of the mother's long legs and took a seat in the grand stand—nature's original bus—and the procession started.

I was slow in focusing the camera and the old spider kept trying to get away. The board she was sitting on

was about four feet from the ground. If she made a leap I knew that I could not make a picture of her with the children. Just as the picture was snapped, Madam Wolf Spider, whose patience had been exhausted, leaped wildly into the air with all the scores of spiderlings holding to her back. When she hit the ground, the impact threw four-fifths of her children-passengers off—spider boys and girls were sprawled into the grass in all directions.

Great excitement prevailed. I placed my foot directly in front of the escaping mother and brought her to a halt. The sun had set by this time and darkness was approaching. The scene that followed was so amusing that I again laughed heartily.

The young spiders went scurrying about in the grass, and as fast as they could find one of their mother's legs, up each one climbed, as a squirrel goes up a tree. By the time that night came on, there was still a third of the spiders lost in the grass. I could not help feeling sorry for the lost youngsters, because I doubted that they would ever be able to contact their mother in the deep, tangled grasswoods.

Two days afterward, however, I found that all my anxiety for the lost urchins had been in vain, because I met Madam Wolf Spider again in my back yard, and I am sure that she must have had every child on her back.



## THE IRON KIMONO \*

*In which the 789 puts  
friendship to the test.*

by Gilbert A. Lathrop

Old Square Jaw Davis took a doubtful look at his speed meter, then switched his keen gaze ahead of the blunt snout of the streamliner to stare at the twin streaks of shining steel that leaped under the spinning wheels of the twelve-car, Diesel-electric train. One hundred and ten miles an hour! And taking it easy! Square Jaw glanced across the control room at young Chuck Herman, his fireman. Chuck was leaning forward on his seat, his whole body singing to the excitement of this rocketlike speed. The old engineer's eyes gleamed with understanding.

Yet the next moment he sighed with a homesick longing for the scent of the coal smoke and the panting favorites of the past. Why couldn't the good old steam locomotives be stepped up to hit this new pace? It was too bad to junk them.

They were slowing down for Sage now, but even so they made a silver streak, flashing into the yards of the home station. Suddenly Square Jaw gasped.

The 789 was gone! Square Jaw half raised from his padded seat, his weathered face expressing his astonishment. He blared a crossing warning on his foghorn whistle and his lips worked beneath his walrus mustache.

The streamliner glided quietly into the station. Square

\* By permission of the author and *The American Boy*.

Jaw snatched up his little black bag and followed by Chuck, scrambled to the platform. There, clear of the crowd of curious people who still turned out to marvel at the twelve-car Diesel-electric unit, he halted and faced his fireman.

"Chuck," he said, "they've moved the 789!"

"Have they?" was all Chuck said. To him, the 789 was just a wrecked locomotive that had gone to glory several years before he started working on the O.S. railroad; just a battered hulk minus whistle, bell, and steam gauge. Of course, Chuck knew the history of the 789. Every man working on the O.S. knew it. And all of them knew where her whistle, bell, and steam gauge had gone, though none of them was telling.

For almost twelve years the 789 had sat on the very tip of the tank spur where the wrecking crew had left her after hauling her into town. "Wild Bill" Holden had been her engineer that night. Hauling the eastbound mail on a red-hot schedule, Wild Bill had rounded Isinglass point down in the canyon and found a short wooden trestle washed out by a cloudburst. The 789 had gone through the bridge. The wreck had been spectacular. The marvel was that nobody had lost his life.

An investigation revealed that Wild Bill Holden had been repeatedly warned about running too fast, and that on a stormy night, with the track almost invisible through the lashing rain, he had been almost ten minutes ahead of his schedule. The wreck cost Wild Bill his job.

No one denied that Bill Holden was a crack engineer, a "natural" in the cab of a high-stepping steam locomotive.

No one, least of all Bill himself, had doubted that after a few months he would be back in an O.S. cab. But the months had rolled into years with Wild Bill trying vainly to force the company into putting him back to work.

He had grown more and more soured, until he had only one friend left; and, strangely enough, that friend was cantankerous old Square Jaw Davis.

In the locker room Square Jaw hurried through his reports. Then without a word to Chuck he snatched up his valise and clumped out. Instead of going toward home, he headed down a crooked, narrow path beaten through the rank weeds behind the roundhouse. It led him to a neat little cottage with a trim lawn in front, a well-tended garden behind, and a sizable lake beyond. From the brick chimney of the cottage trailed a lazy wisp of smoke.

As Square Jaw approached, lanky Bill Holden came out of the cottage, his sour, lined face almost friendly.

"Glad to see yuh, Square Jaw," he called.

"Everything O.K., Bill?" rumbled Square Jaw.

Bill Holden nodded as he unlatched the front gate. "Come on in," he urged.

Square Jaw followed the ex-engineer up the path, across the porch, and into the living room. Everything was in perfect order. On the shelf above the homemade stone fireplace, a brass locomotive bell, a chime whistle, and a steam gauge were all polished to glistening brightness.

"They've moved your old engine, Bill," Square Jaw growled as he dropped into a rocker.

"I know," Bill nodded. "Took her away yesterday."

"To scrap?"

"Scrap the 789! You crazy? Why, there was a million miles of service left in her." Face almost glowing, Bill reached for a newspaper. "They ain't scrappin' her."

"Then what——"

"She's gonna be rebuilt, Square Jaw," said Bill and laid the newspaper in Square Jaw's lap. Pictured there was a streamlined steam locomotive, her boiler top unbroken by domes, whistle, pipes, or smokestack. Only the lower part of her wheels showed below the steel jacket that streamlined her.

Square Jaw frowned. "You mean they're gonna doll the 789 up in a iron kimono?" he blasted.

Bill nodded. Eyes dreamy, he said, "She was about the fastest engine ever bought by this railroad in her time. More'n once I stepped her up to ninety an' she didn't half try either. I'd like to run her when she's finished an' show some of 'em how to walk her down the high iron. But this company is cold-blooded as a fish!

"An' that ain't all," he raved. "I got a letter from the superintendent yesterday notifyin' me I got to move my house off their land because they want to build a water-treatin' plant here!"

"Is it their land?" asked Square Jaw.

"That's the hard part of it. It is their land—was when I built here. But then I was ace-high with the company an' they told me they'd never need this piece of ground. It took me years to get trees growed like they are now, an' the rosebushes——"

Square Jaw got to his feet. "I'll see what I can figure out, Bill," he promised and shuffled to the door.

The result was that a few days later Square Jaw Davis visited Superintendent Martz in his office. "I'm Davis, engineer on the Mountain Zephyr," Square Jaw began.

"Glad to see you, Davis. Sit down." Martz motioned to a chair. He had been superintendent of the West End Division almost three years.

"Thanks," growled Square Jaw. "What I come to see you about was Bill Holden, who ran an engine here twelve years ago."

Martz's face hardened. "Yes?"

"Seems the company wants to use the land Bill's house is on fer a water-treatin' plant."

"It's company land," said Martz.

"I know but, you see, Holden has spent years gettin' trees to grow down there. There's plenty of room fer the water-treatin' plant without movin' his house."

"Plans call for the plant where the house stands." Martz's voice was cold. "Furthermore, I've gone into Holden's service records. Holden was fired for using poor judgment and for causing a nasty wreck. Probably he'd have been put back to work after a few months, but he was too hot-headed and impatient and tried to browbeat the officials into putting him back to work at once. He even threatened some of them. Naturally, they didn't call him back, and he's done plenty of talking about the O.S. railroad since. But that isn't why we told him to move. The fact is that there where his house stands is the logical place for our treating plant."

Square Jaw got up, nodding slowly. "I see," he growled.

"I have instructions to swear out a peace warrant

against Holden if he causes any more trouble. And if necessary, he'll be forcibly removed from our land," said Martz flatly.

"I'll talk with him," promised Square Jaw.

A few evenings later he told Bill what Martz had said, adding, "Trouble with you, Bill, is you've never held your feelin's in check."

Bill raged with anger against Martz and the whole railroad company.

"But you see, Bill," Square Jaw argued, "when you put the 789 through that bridge you was usin' no judgment. You was at fault an' the company had to fire you. But instead of blamin' yourself, you figgered the officials had given you a dirty deal, an' you been nursin' your grudge ever since. I ain't sayin' I approve of 'em makin' you move your house, but they got a side to their story too."

"They've tried to get even with me!" shouted Bill.

"Naw, they ain't. Take that whistle, bell, and steam gauge over your fireplace. Every official on this pike knows that you got 'em, that you stole 'em, you might say. They're worth around a hunderd dollars, I reckon. But them fellers knew you loved the 789 an' kinda looked on the whistle, bell, an' steam gauge as belongin' to you. So they let you keep 'em."

Bill paced the floor. "One thing I c'n tell you," he grated. "They don't move me away from here without a struggle!"

"But you could find another piece of land an' I reckon the company would move your house fer you free," said Square Jaw.

"Find another piece of land! What would I buy it with? I haven't a dime."

"They'd probably give you another piece of land if things was different."

"Meanin' I should go to 'em on bended knees and beg 'em fer mercy?" rasped Bill.

"If you'd showed them twelve years ago you realized you was in the wrong, Bill, things would be different fer you today," said Square Jaw quietly.

That was just it, he thought as he walked away from Bill's house. Bill was too hard-headed to listen to reason.

Bill maintained his stand against moving off the railroad land. Chuck heard rumors that Bill had locked himself in his house with a double-barreled shotgun. He passed the rumors on to Square Jaw, and the old engineer sadly shook his head, but drew comfort from the fact that the railroad company seemed in no hurry to put Bill off the land.

Meanwhile summer glided by. The 789 was still down in the back shops, being rebuilt and streamlined.

"I looked her over the other day," an East End engineer told Square Jaw. "Bill Holden won't recognize her when she comes out. Of course, her valves an' cylinders an' frame an' boiler will be the same. An' I reckon she'll be the same kind of a mill, too. Remember how nobody but Bill could ever get real speed out of her?"

"I remember," agreed Square Jaw. "But she'll get all the company officials standin' on their ears if she does any loafin' now—it cost a good fifty thousand to build her over!"

The streamlined 789, resplendent in her iron kimono,

a sleek, glistening, stainless-steel creation, came back from the shops the middle of September. She was a treat to the eyes, but a tryout on the East End left her designers unsatisfied. She was quick on the throttle, had a snappy pick-up with full tonnage, and was as easy on track and roadbed as the Diesel-electric trains. But she would not make the cruising speed of one hundred miles an hour nor the top speed of a hundred and thirty or more they had hoped for.

The officials, it was rumored, were bitterly disappointed. It looked as if they had spent that fifty thousand unwisely.

Just about the time the old engine came to the West End for further testing of its powers, the company put Bill Holden off its land. Bill raved but moved off. He stored his belongings with Square Jaw.

"What you gonna do with your house?" Square Jaw asked.

Bill shrugged. "Leave it. It 'ud cost a thousand dollars to buy some ground an' have it moved. I'm broke. Guess they got me whipped. The railroad, Square Jaw, is a cold-blooded machine without no conscience."

Square Jaw made no reply to that. "What you gonna do now?" he asked.

"Goin' into the hills behind Solar Summit an' do a little prospectin'."

"Kinda keep in touch with me," suggested the engineer. "If you need anything, maybe I can help you out."

Soon after, Square Jaw went down to look over the streamlined 789, newly arrived in Sage. Bill Holden, keeping in the background, was there. Hunger for his



old engine was in Bill's eyes as he gazed at her. Later, while Square Jaw bent down to look up under the iron kimono, Bill came up beside him.

"They tell me she ain't comin' up to the speed she was expected to make," he said softly.

"She ain't. It's too bad. She does a nice job of runnin' around sixty. Above that she acts like a race horse bein' held back by tight reins," said Square Jaw.

"I never did run her fast as she would go," said Bill reminiscently. He stooped and peered up at the machinery beneath her stainless steel covering. He straightened with a grunt. "I know why she won't go faster," he said, sour satisfaction in his voice.

Square Jaw stooped in his turn and squinted up for a long moment. But he was puzzled. "I don't see anythin' wrong," he puffed, straightening.

Then he discovered he was talking to the air. Bill, his stubborn back turned, was walking away.

"He ain't goin' to tell what ails her," Square Jaw concluded. "Well, let him go. I won't waste my time beggin' a mule to talk." Scowling thoughtfully, he studied the engine again, and shook his head.

The 789 was placed on local passenger service west of Sage where high speeds were not necessary. Bill Holden disappeared into the rough country behind Solar Summit with a prospector's pick and shovel, some food, and a few sticks of dynamite. Square Jaw remained engineer on the Mountain Zephyr.

The day came when the frenzy of autumn coloring was gone from the mountain sides and all the leaves were dead.

A hush seemed to hang over this high country—a warning that winter was coming. Square Jaw sat at the controls of the Mountain Zephyr that day in early November. Ahead was Solar Summit.

The bullet nose rounded the last curve below the top of the hill and the glistening string of air-conditioned coaches followed. Square Jaw blared for the station and his hand started to fall from the whistle plunger. Then he straightened, scowling, and rapped two short blasts on the horn. The semaphore signal over the depot had gone up to the horizontal—it was signaling the streamliner to stop! Only an emergency would have halted them here. The Mountain Zephyr was a non-stop train.

The station operator came hurrying to hand Square Jaw a message: *Engr. & Condr. No. 2. You will wait Solar Summit until man injured in premature explosion dynamite brought from mountains. Transport this man R.R. hospital Plainview.* It was signed by Superintendent Martz.

"Must be some railroad official got hurt," rumbled Square Jaw.

The operator shook his head. "No. Just an old prospector. I think his name's Holden."

Square Jaw blinked and started to speak, but no words came. The railroad company was holding the Mountain Zephyr, its million-dollar, non-stop train, to pick up an injured prospector. And that prospector was Bill Holden, who believed the company was a cold-blooded machine.

"Wonder what Bill thinks about it now," mumbled Square Jaw as he settled back in his seat.

The eastbound streamliner lost forty minutes at Solar Summit that day. Bill Holden, fortunately, had not been bending over the dynamite when it exploded, but he had been close enough to get his face badly peppered with gravel and to receive a severe shock.

A week later an East End engineer told Square Jaw he had been down to the hospital to see Bill.

"He's gettin' along O.K.," the East End man said, "but he didn't have much to say. I mentioned something about the railroad company to him and he didn't flare up like he used to. He just sat there. Maybe he's changed his ideas about these cold-blooded corporations."

The company had not moved Bill's house from their land. Everybody figured they would probably do it in the spring when the treating plant was to be built.

The middle of November found the mountains on either side of Solar Summit blanketed with deep snow. It found something else. Established at the tiny town of Solar Summit was a winter sports colony. The youthful members skied, tobogganed, skated on the little mountain lake, and hiked through the snowbound forests. Almost every train but the Mountain Zephyr halted at the summit to let off enthusiastic crowds.

The heavy snow was giving the Mountain Zephyr a great deal of trouble. In that kind of weather, steam horses, with their gripping drivers and almost unlimited power, were needed. Early December found Square Jaw and Chuck waiting for their Zephyr to streak in from the west. That day, instead of the three Diesel-electric motor cars, the streamlined 789 was coupled ahead of the coaches.

Going west the day before, the Mountain Zephyr had stuck twice in heavy drifts below Solar Summit.

The streamliner pulled into town with the 789 hissing on the head end. Square Jaw and Chuck climbed into the cab, and the conductor handed Square Jaw his running orders. As the old engineer read them, he frowned.

*No. 2, run 2, two hours late. Helper to Sage.*

So the officials were dead sure the 789 couldn't make scheduled time with the Mountain Zephyr in tow. Well, maybe not. She certainly hadn't made any great speed since coming from the shops. But Bill Holden was dead sure she had it in her. Bill had taken a squint under her iron kimono, and he'd seen whatever it was that was holding her back. Just one look, and he'd known. Then it must have been a special kink about the 789, something that hadn't been changed when they streamlined her. An idea had been dawning on Square Jaw.

And right then and there, with Chuck staring, he heaved himself out of the cab, dropped stiffly into a crouch on his heels, and took a long look under the shining silver jacket of the 789. When he straightened, his expression was half worried, half triumphant.

Chuck couldn't understand it. "You see what's off?" he asked.

"Ain't nothin' off," growled Square Jaw. "That's the trouble. There oughta be. But I guess I'm as smart as Bill Holden." He sat back and shut his mouth tight.

"Thanks for the burst of confidence," grinned Chuck, and then they were pulling out.

Square Jaw told himself grumpily that there wasn't

any use bothering about speed when the management didn't mind getting the train through the drifts a couple hours late. But he couldn't resist the urge to try out his idea. Twice, going up the hill, he pulled his reverse lever four holes back of center on the quadrant! Each time the 789 literally leaped ahead.

The second time he did it, Chuck crossed the deck. "What kind of dizzy valve motion has this engine got?" he demanded.

"Her valve motion's O.K.," growled Square Jaw. "It's your notion that's dizzy." Again he shut his mouth tight.

"The way you tell me everything is touching," Chuck announced, and returned to his seat wondering what Square Jaw had up his sleeve.

He kept on wondering, and it is doubtful whether Square Jaw knew himself. He was playing a hunch. Bill Holden had been released from the hospital a few days before . . .

Solar Summit, and another red board! Square Jaw saw the crowd in front of the station as he closed his throttle to drift to a halt. The crowd was grouped about a stretcher, and Superintendent Martz was bending over the figure on the stretcher. Bill Holden stood near, looking anxious and surprisingly friendly.

Martz turned and swung himself into Square Jaw's cab, his face grey with worry.

"Davis," he said, "my daughter here came down with acute appendicitis about an hour ago. She's got to have an emergency operation. I got in touch with the eastbound

mailplane before it left Salt Lake. But they can't land here—the snow's too deep. At Sage, the landing field is clear and they'll land there. Only, with weather conditions bad, they can't risk being delayed. If you can make an average speed of eighty miles an hour from here to Sage, we'll connect with them there. I've arranged for a clear track in."

Square Jaw glanced toward Bill Holden, and a gleam came into his eyes. But when he spoke, his voice was gruffly doubtful. "You know, Mr. Martz," he rumbled, "how this engine has never done the fast runnin' expected of her——"

"I know." There was helplessness in Martz's voice.

"But there's a man standin' right out there who can make this engine get up an' run if anybody can," said Square Jaw harshly.

Martz's eyes followed the jerk of Square Jaw's thumb. "You mean Bill Holden?"

"I mean Bill Holden, only engineer who ever did get real performance out of the 789!"

Without a word Martz was off the engine and over by Bill. As the superintendent spoke rapidly, a light seemed to spring into Bill's face. He nodded slowly and then strode over to the cab, shoulders up and spine straight.

With the barest nod to Square Jaw, he slid up on the engineer's seat. Martz followed him into the cab.

Two short blasts on the whistle and the 789 whammed her way out of the station. Bill was utterly oblivious to the others in the cab. His eyes glinted straight ahead and his hands were caressing when they rested on air valve,

throttle, or reverse lever. The Mountain Zephyr dropped down from Solar Summit at eighty miles an hour. Then began the stiff grind up the canyon. The 789 under the guidance of her old engineer seemed almost human in her performance. The speed meter in the cab danced between eighty and ninety.

Two big tears rolled from Bill's eyes and ran down over his leathery cheeks. A twelve-year hunger for the roaring road was being satisfied.

The streamliner clipped over the last stretch into Sage well over a hundred miles an hour. Square Jaw touched Martz on the shoulder and nodded toward Bill Holden. "He's changed toward the company, Mr. Martz, ever since they took him to the hospital."

Martz nodded. "I know. I've been watching him." He crossed to Bill's side, and spoke. "Calling you to run this engine, Holden, is, as you know, just the same as reinstating you."

Bill smiled and shook his head. "Just forget that, Mr. Martz. I'm only repayin' you for what you did for me when I was hurt last fall."

"Nevertheless," said Martz, "I'm going to reinstate you—put you back to running one of our engines. This engine, if you want her. And I'll see that you're given a deed to that plot of ground where your house stands."

Bill couldn't speak. Instead, he whistled for Sage where a mailplane was gliding toward the earth and a swift ambulance waiting at the station to carry Martz's daughter to the airport. And the lilt of the whistle expressed Bill's feelings more plainly than words.

On the way home Chuck suddenly halted and faced his engineer. "Square Jaw," he said accusingly, "you could have made the same fast run with the 789 that Bill Holden made. I don't know how you step her up, but you can do it. You're an old faker!"

"Nope, I ain't. I jest did a leetle arrangin'. Which was right, since I'd never have knowed about that reach rod if Bill hadn't started me lookin' round under her."

"Reach rod! What about it?"

"It's a leetle mite too long, Chuck. It ain't plumb noticeable, an' even smart mechanics might not get onto it without doin' a lot of figgerin'. But an old-timer who's been workin' a full throttle on her, he'd get onto the rod bein' too long. Bill did, years back, an' I finally guessed things out. All you got to do to get real speed out of the 789 is work her in the back motion."

"Crazy," mused Chuck, "but slick!"

"And I arranged for Bill to bring her in," Square Jaw went on doggedly as they tramped along, "because—"

"Because," Chuck cut in, "you wanted Bill to buzz her in here so fast he'd get Martz's daughter to the hospital in plenty of time. Which he did. And now Martz and Bill will be friends for life, and Bill's sure to tell the company about any mechanical kink that's costing them money, and everything's swell—and you're to blame."

"All right, all right," growled Square Jaw. "But how about you keepin' quiet about the whole business?"

"Okay," promised Chuck, and grinned down upon his engineer with pride.



## SMELLS \*

*What is your favorite smell? Could it be fresh-cut grass, with the dew on it,—or Thanksgiving dinner cooking,—or the odor of hyacinths?*

*by Christopher Morley*

Why is it that the poets tell  
So little of the sense of smell?  
These are the odors I love well:

The smell of coffee freshly ground;  
Or rich plum pudding, holly crowned;  
Or onions fried and deeply browned.

The fragrance of a fumy pipe;  
The smell of apples, newly ripe;  
And printers' ink on leaden type.

Woods by moonlight in September  
Breathe most sweet; and I remember  
Many a smoky camp-fire ember.

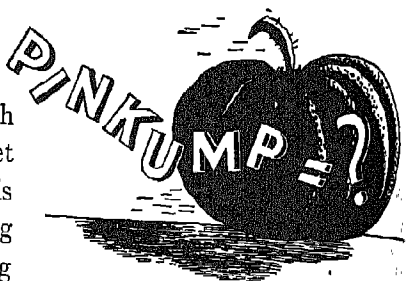
Camphor, turpentine, and tea,  
The balsam of a Christmas tree,  
These are whiffs of gramarye . . .  
*A ship smells best of all to me!*

\* From *Poems* by Christopher Morley. By permission of J. B. Lippincott Company, publishers.

## THINKING SPEED

### A Self-Test

Some people think much more rapidly than others. Let two or more of your friends try their wits at rearranging the letters in the following scrambled words. Time them and find how much difference there is between thinking speeds.



(Example: pinkump—pumpkin)

#### 1. Vegetables:

gebabac, norc, sepa, attoomes, haqsus

#### 2. Presidents' names:

smaad, rylet, cinllon, tasgnihnow, feynosref

#### 3. Animals, both domestic and wild: (See how many your friends and you can figure out in one minute.)

- |                 |               |               |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. gdo          | 11. nukks     | 21. toga      |
| 2. tca          | 12. woc       | 22. deynok    |
| 3. nilo         | 13. lemu      | 23. someo     |
| 4. greit        | 14. gip       | 24. tar       |
| 5. usome        | 15. gorf      | 25. duckochow |
| 6. tibarb       | 16. rillagota |               |
| 7. lecma        | 17. braze     |               |
| 8. reba         | 18. lubfafo   |               |
| 9. pomposthipua | 19. shore     |               |
| 10. halew       | 20. pehes     |               |





## THE INN OF RETURN

*Dr. Durby, country doctor, pits  
his knowledge of human nature  
against the "perfect crime."*

by Don C. Jones

### CHARACTERS

*TRAVERS, an English novelist of note, who is staying at  
"Wayside Inn" in hope of gathering some material for a  
new novel.*

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DR. DARBY, *a country doctor with revenge in his heart and sarcasm on his tongue. A bit gray about the temples.*

CHARLIE COOK, *a nervous, sickly looking youth with an overbearing conscience. As clerk of Wayside Inn, he lives in an Inferno of Horrors.*

THE SPINWELL SISTERS, *middle aged, but none the less active. Traveling seems to be their only occupation.*

MURPHY, *an Irishman, of course. A jewel merchant, and an able one. About thirty years old and full of pep.*

RANDALL, *a conscientious young man. Same age as Murphy. He can't quite get over the tragedy of George Mann.*

THE GHOST OF GEORGE MANN, *no spoken lines; but the climax of the play depends on the acting of this character. Make up and sound effects (thunder, lightning, etc.) help to give vivid portrayal.*

SCENE. *Wayside Inn, New England.*

TIME. *The present.*

*The curtain rises. Down center is an old fashioned, leather covered arm chair. To the left of it, and slightly upstage, is an equally old fashioned hotel davenport; while left of that, slightly facing a fireplace down left, is a mate to the chair center. Up left is the entrance which leads to the outer hall of the Inn. Up right the stair hall entrance is viewed. Down right is the clerk's desk with all its necessary paraphernalia, such as: key rack, mail rack, vault, office lamp on the desk, and anything else that might generally add to the conglomeration. Up center is a large window which, during the course of the play, displays the*

*storm and the forest beyond in all its wet splendor. The stage is dimly lighted, having only a reading lamp behind the davenport and the lamp on the clerk's desk to serve as illumination. The stage is empty, with the exception of a lone figure seated on the davenport, reading. There is a sharp crackle of thunder, yet this man pays no attention; he is reading his own book! Dr. Darby enters up right in a bathrobe and bedroom slippers. The action starts.* DARBY (*entering up right*). Travers?

TRAVERS. Yes. (*Turning around in the davenport.*)

Oh, hello, Doctor, I didn't recognize your voice at first. Have a chair.

DARBY. Thanks. (*Sits in chair center.*) Where's Charlie?

TRAVERS. Charlie?

DARBY. Pardon me, Travers, I forgot that you were almost a stranger here. Charlie is the night clerk.

TRAVERS. Oh, yes. He walked out a short while ago. Didn't say where he was going. I say, Doctor, he strikes me as being a queer chap. I tried to strike up a conversation before he went out and he did nothing but mumble. I became quite disgusted, if you get what I mean.

DARBY. Your subject must have been quite distasteful.

TRAVERS. Oh, absolutely not. Quite the contrary, I asked him some questions concerning the Inn.

DARBY. Yes, he usually does mumble when it comes to questions concerning the Inn.

TRAVERS. Really? And why?

DARBY. I don't think Charlie is entirely satisfied with his job here.

TRAVERS. Why doesn't he leave?

DARBY. He's planning to, from all I can gather. I don't blame him. This confounded place gives me the jitters. I should be in bed now, but can I sleep?

TRAVERS. Can't you?

DARBY. With the rain running through a half inch hole in the roof?

TRAVERS. Did you say "rain"?

DARBY. One of the worst storms I've seen this year.

TRAVERS. Really, I hadn't noticed.

DARBY. That book must be interesting. Mind if I take a look at it? (*He comes to davenport.*)

TRAVERS. Certainly not. (*Hands book to Darby.*)

DARBY (*receiving book*). It's your own book!

TRAVERS. I do write, you know.

DARBY. Yes, I know you're a novelist, but to be so interested in one's own book . . . it's uncanny.

TRAVERS. On the contrary, it becomes deucedly fascinating after the hundredth time through.

DARBY. All of which brings me to an impertinent question I should like to ask you.

TRAVERS. You have my permission.

DARBY. What is an important English writer doing in a small American country hotel?

TRAVERS. Looking for material, Doctor.

DARBY. A new novel?

TRAVERS (*nodding*). One with an element of mystery, if

possible. I've desired for some time to write such a story, but the situation has never arrived. I swore this time, however, not to take my pen in hand until I can grasp the right plot.

DARBY. What would you say if I were able to give you a decidedly unusual plot?

TRAVERS (*in the manner of a knight of old*). I should immediately get down on my knees and beg of you to explain this to me.

DARBY (*seriously*). That's not necessary, Travers. Would you consider this Inn a setting for a possible plot?

TRAVERS. Why . . .

DARBY. Let me explain. This Inn is enveloped in an antiquated legend, which strange as it may seem, appears to be working out to the *n*th degree.

TRAVERS. Sounds interesting.

DARBY. This hotel has been in the family of Jonathan Adams for at least four generations. When it was finally handed down to Jonathan, the legend found in him its strongest believer.

TRAVERS. But what is the legend?

DARBY. I'm coming to that. The natives in this part of the country call this hotel "The Inn of Return," and here's the reason: in all the years that the Adams family have had this place, no traveler having once been here has ever failed to return for at least a second visit.

TRAVERS. How queer!

DARBY. It is *that*.

TRAVERS. And how is the legend unwinding during . . . shall we call it Jonathan's administration?

DARBY. Jonathan is lacking a few return guests, and it worries him.

TRAVERS. But there's still time.

DARBY (*shaking his head*). Not a great deal. Jonathan is eighty-five years old. Aside from that, one of his guests can't return.

TRAVERS. Dead?

DARBY (*nodding "yes"*). Shot! That's part of your plot, Travers.

TRAVERS (*smiling*). I should have my note book.

DARBY. You won't need it. Before you leave this place I daresay you will know as much about this situation as anyone around here.

TRAVERS. And about this murdered chap . . .

DARBY. His name was George Mann, a queer but likable fellow. He had only been here several days when a traveling jewel merchant, name of Murphy, dropped in one stormy night . . . and incidentally, he is one of the guests yet to return.

TRAVERS. I say, there are dramatic possibilities in this old place. But go on, your story is becoming very interesting.

DARBY. Well, sir; Murphy, it seems, was carrying an important load of diamonds and had no intention of staying in any such place as this. The storm changed his plans. He left his jewels with Charlie, who put them in the hotel safe. (*Charlie enters up left.*) Here's



Charlie. Let's ask him to finish the story. Oh, Charlie!  
CHARLIE (*none too pleased*). Something I can do for you,  
Doctor?

DARBY. Charlie, would you mind retelling the story of  
that jewel robbery we had two years ago? You see,  
Charlie, I would tell the story, but it might not be ac-  
curate.

(*Charlie takes chair center.*)

CHARLIE (*unwillingly*). Yeah . . . okay, I'll tell about  
it. I can't see why you want that story told to every  
new guest we have here, Doctor. Everybody read about  
it in the papers.

DARBY. It makes a good subject for conversation, Charlie.  
Start your story.

CHARLIE. Well, a couple of years ago, on a stormy night;  
in fact, it was raining just like it is tonight . . .

DARBY. If you will think carefully, Charlie, you will re-  
member that tonight is the second anniversary of that  
little incident.

CHARLIE (*pause, staring down stage*). That's so, isn't  
it? Two years . . .

DARBY (*striving to press something from Charlie*). It's  
etched quite clearly on your mind, isn't it, Charlie?

CHARLIE (*snappingly*). Why shouldn't it be?

DARBY (*shrugging*). No reason at all. In fact, I re-  
member things myself, Charlie. I think we all remem-  
ber things, different things.

TRAVERS. I say, I'm not hearing my story.

DARBY. A thousand pardons, Travers. Go on, Charlie.



You see, Mr. Travers hasn't heard this tale, so you aren't telling the story entirely in vain.

CHARLIE. As I was saying, this all happened on a stormy night a couple of years ago. A traveling jewel agent, fellow named Murphy, stopped here. He couldn't go on because of the storm. He put his jewels in the safe back of the clerk's desk. (*Points to safe.*) There was a fellow staying here at the time, called . . .

what was his name, Doctor?

DARBY. You do forget some things, don't you, Charlie?

His name was George Mann, remember?

CHARLIE. Yeah, that was his name. Well, anyway, this fellow Mann came downstairs about two o'clock in the morning, stuck a gun on me and ordered me to open the safe.

TRAVERS. And you opened the safe?

CHARLIE (*emphatically*). Of course. What else could I do, looking into the barrel of a thirty-two automatic?

DARBY. You even know the caliber of the gun, don't you, Charlie?

CHARLIE. All the details were printed in the "Times."

DARBY. That's right, they were, weren't they? Go on with the story, Charlie.

CHARLIE. That's all. (*Laughingly.*) There isn't more.

DARBY. Indeed! And what happened to George?  
(*Quickly as if to cover something.*) George Mann, I mean.

CHARLIE (*rising quickly*). What are you trying to do to me?

DARBY (*also rising*). Charlie, keep cool. Your weak heart!

CHARLIE. What do you know about my weak heart?

(*He sits in chair center.*)

DARBY. I am a doctor, Charlie. Maybe *I* should finish the story.

CHARLIE. No! I'll finish. George Mann left the hotel after robbing the jewels. I called the police right after he left. They caught him boarding an east-bound train and they . . . they shot him.

DARBY (*slowly, and half to himself*). In the back!

TRAVERS. Couldn't more humane methods than shooting have been used?

DARBY. Charlie warned them that Mann was a desperate criminal.

CHARLIE. How did you know that?

DARBY. The sheriff told me.

TRAVERS. The jewels were returned, I suppose?

DARBY. No, that's a problem that's still baffling.

CHARLIE (*breaking in suddenly*). He undoubtedly sold the stuff along with his gun before he boarded the train. He was no amateur.

DARBY. Indeed, he wasn't; it was a little too much of a job for an amateur to handle, eh, Charlie?

(*Charlie ignores this last remark as if he had never*

*heard it, rises and walks to the clerk's desk. Travers looks questioningly at Dr. Darby, who returns the look with a smug smile.)*

TRAVERS. But the connection, (*Darby wrinkles his brow.*) the connection between this jewel robbery, the murder—if I may call it that—and The Inn of Return?

(*Charlie raises his eyes from the desk, his ears intently eager to grasp every morsel of conversation.*)

DARBY. Can't you see it? It means that a dead man must return to verify the truth of the legend.

CHARLIE (*suddenly becoming alarmed and alert*). That's impossible!

DARBY. Mr. Cook, I should like very much to spend some evening proving to you, through the medium of medical history, that his returning would not be a lone case. There have been any number of such events. I'll admit, however, that if this were an ordinary situation, the chance should be very slim. *But George Mann has an obligation to fulfill!*

CHARLIE (*seriously*). You're . . . you're crazy. He's been dead for two years.

DARBY. *Exactly* two years, Charlie. Wouldn't it be dramatic if he should return on an anniversary? (*He rises and walks to window up center, followed by the eyes of Cook and Travers.*) A storm is so vengeful. (*He turns and faces down stage.*) Queer that it should so resemble that storm of exactly two years ago. (*He turns again to look outside. A flash of lightning illuminates the window and the forest beyond the window. Then a rumble of thunder is heard.*) It's getting

worse, too. (*He turns and walks toward the clerk's desk.*) Charlie, do you remember the names of the guests who haven't returned for a second time?

CHARLIE. No. (*He tries vainly to concentrate on something on the desk.*)

DARBY. Then why don't you open this drawer?

(*Points to a drawer in clerk's desk.*)

CHARLIE. Why?

DARBY. Are you afraid to?

CHARLIE. No, I'm not afraid to.

DARBY. Then open it! (*Charlie looks at Darby awhile, then reaches to key rack and proceeds to remove a key. He puts key in lock of the drawer.*) Your hands are shaking.

CHARLIE. Well, what of it? It's my heart.

DARBY (*closely watches the face of Cook while he unlocks the drawer*). Yes, I should say it is your heart.

(*Cook raises his head, looks into the eyes of Darby, then pulls open the drawer.*)

CHARLIE (*looking in drawer*). Just a note book.

(*He takes it out.*)

DARBY. That's all I expected. You see, the names of the return guests are in that book. Would you mind reading them to me? I left my glasses in my room.

TRAVERS (*rising*). I say, I'll read them for you.

(*Walks to clerk's desk.*)

DARBY. Fine! (*Takes book from Charlie and hands it to Travers.*) Let's sit on the davenport . . . more light.

TRAVERS. All right. (*They cross to davenport, left center.*)

DARBY (*offering Travers a smoke*). Cigarette?

TRAVERS. No, I think not; thanks, just the same.

(*Darby lights up.*)

DARBY. Now, I'm all ready; let's have them.

TRAVERS. Well, the first two names here indicate that they might be sisters: Martha and Dorothy Spinwell.

DARBY (*laughingly*). Won't they be flustered when they find a famous novelist in the house?

TRAVERS. Oh, but I say, I'm not going to be here the rest of my life, you know.

DARBY. Of course not, but if you will believe my premonition, they will all return tonight.

TRAVERS. Including George Mann?

DARBY. Not George Mann himself; he's dead. Maybe his ghost, eh?

TRAVERS. I say, you're a queer one.

DARBY. Am I?

TRAVERS. So queer.

DARBY (*half in a whisper*). Don't think too badly of me now. Perhaps I am partially mad. Everything will be explained later.

TRAVERS. That's good enough for me.

DARBY. Thank you. (*Resuming natural voice.*) And now, who is the next guest on the line of on-comers?

TRAVERS. A man named Ian Kennedy.

DARBY. An actor, or rather a manager of a traveling stock company. He, too, was here the night Mann was killed. I never in my life before saw a man so broken up over the death of a chance acquaintance as he was; but go on, I'm interrupting.

TRAVERS. Not at all; I like to find out about these people.  
The next name is Murphy. That's the jewel merchant,  
I imagine?

DARBY. The same. He's a pretty right fellow, too. He  
told me that he couldn't believe Mann stole those  
jewels; in fact, the only person that does believe it is  
Charlie.

CHARLIE (*glancing up from desk*). I've got a right to  
believe that! I know it's true, and so do the police.

DARBY (*softly*). Of course, Charlie, of course. (*To  
Travers.*) There is one more guest, and his name is  
. . . now don't tell me . . . it's Randall, isn't it?

TRAVERS. You're right, Doctor. That makes five of them.

CHARLIE. You'll never see them.

DARBY. Indeed! Are you forgetting the legend of the  
Inn?

CHARLIE. Legend! Who believes in legends?

DARBY. All of us do; even you, Charlie, but you're afraid  
to admit it. (*He takes the memo book from Travers,  
rises and walks to the clerk's desk.*) You can put this  
back now, Charlie. (*Hands him the book.*) It's valu-  
able; keep good care of it.

(*Charlie puts the book in drawer and locks the drawer.  
Darby walks to window, up center.*)

TRAVERS. Is it still raining, Doctor?

DARBY. Pouring! There should be some customers to-  
night. Possibly even . . . return guests, eh, Charlie?  
(*He is about to return to the davenport, when some-  
thing outside catches his eye.*) There's a car drawing

up outside, Charlie. Better go out and give them a hand.

CHARLIE. It's not stopping here.

DARBY (*still looking outside*). No? It seems to be coming into the parking lot. Whoever it is must have been here before . . . appear to know the grounds pretty well. There's a lot of baggage, too. It's your duty to see that they get in all right, Charlie. (*Charlie grabs a slicker hanging back of the clerk's desk, goes to the window up center, looks out, then exits up left.*) Well, Travers, it rather looks as if we're up for the rest of the night. We might as well have a little party! (*Goes to clerk's desk and lifts receiver from phone.*) Hello, operator! Hello, operator! (*To Travers.*) These local operators all sleep like logs; you can't raise them on a bet. (*Into phone.*) Hello? I wish to speak to Ian Kennedy, who resides in the Bayport Hotel, Bayport. No, I don't know the number of the hotel. Will you put that through right away? Thank you. (*Turns to Travers.*) I'm going to ask Kennedy to come up here for the rest of the night. He's just like I am; he can't sleep when it's raining. That way, we'll at least have one of the guests returning.

TRAVERS. I say, but won't it be rather hard traveling on a night like this?

DARBY. Bayport's only fifteen or twenty miles from here. I think he'll enjoy coming down. (*Into the phone.*) Hello? Hello, hello, Kennedy. I don't suppose you know who is talking to you? Yes, it's Darby all right.



What was that? No, I didn't catch your opening performance in Bayport this evening, but I promise I'll be there tomorrow night. In the meantime, Kennedy, how about driving over and spending the night with me? Yes, I have a friend here I should like to have you meet. (*Glances at Travers.*) And then we might put on that little party we've planned so long. Remember? What? Oh, you can take your time. All right then, I'll be seeing you. Fine and dandy! Good bye.

(*Hangs receiver on hook.*)

TRAVERS. He's coming?

DARBY. Leaving immediately! I think you'll like him, Travers. He's an excellent actor. Had several chances to hit Broadway, but he just keeps plodding over the country playing Shakespeare. Not much money in it, but he loves it. He's the fellow to have for a friend.

TRAVERS. Most artists are that way, except when crossed.

DARBY. And then they're murderous. (*He walks to fireplace, down left, and stands with his back to the fire.*) Kennedy is like that. (*Pause.*) By the way, Travers, if the rest of these guests *should* return, would you rather remain unIntroduced?

TRAVERS. That would be best. I have come this far practically unrecognized. I think it would be better if I stayed that way.

DARBY. I thought so; I don't blame you a bit. I'll see to it that you're just another guest.

TRAVERS. You're very kind, Doctor.

DARBY. Not at all.

*(Travers resumes reading. Charlie enters up left, carrying bags, followed by the Spinwell sisters.)*

DOROTHY *(seeing Dr. Darby in front of the fireplace)*.

Why, Dr. Darby! Oh, Martha, look here! *(Points to Darby.)*

MARTHA. Well, forever more!

*(They come to him. Charlie goes to desk down right and removes rain coat.)*

DARBY *(shaking her hand)*. I'm glad to see you again, Dorothy; and how are you, Martha? *(Shakes hands.)*

I thought you two literally swore you would never stop here again.

MARTHA. You can imagine, Doctor, after what happened the last time we were here, we had no desire to return again.

DOROTHY. But what could we do? We certainly couldn't have gone on!

DARBY. I think you were very wise. Now, if you're only wise enough to get a room that doesn't leak . . .

MARTHA. Oh, my goodness, I guess we're going to get wet, at any rate. Come on, Dorothy, let's turn in; I'm dead.

DOROTHY. I'm with you there, sister! What rooms have you open, Charlie?

*(They go to the clerk's desk.)*

CHARLIE. Our best room is number five.

MARTHA. Oh, no, you don't! We're not taking that room. This is the Inn of Return, Charlie. We don't want any ghosts walking into our room in the middle of

the night. How about the room we had two years ago; seven?

CHARLIE. You can have that.

DOROTHY. Let's get started, then.

*(Charlie takes the bags and key, and he exits up right, followed by the two sisters.)*

DOROTHY. Good night, Doctor.

*(Exits, up right.)*

DARBY. Good night, Dorothy.

MARTHA. See you in the morning.

*(Exits, up right.)*

DARBY. Okay!

*(Pause.)*

TRAVERS *(glancing up from his book, then turning around to see if all have gone)*. I say! Why the emphasis on room five?

DARBY. It was Mann's room.

TRAVERS. Oh! Then . . . then these sisters know about it?

DARBY. They were here at the time.

TRAVERS. Then almost all of the people yet to return were here that night two years ago?

DARBY. I was just thinking about that. I am sure that all were here except . . . well, possibly even Randall was here. We'll find that out when he comes.

TRAVERS. You really believe he will come?

DARBY. I don't know what to believe, Travers. Down deep inside of me, I can see all of them trooping in here tonight. And yet, looking at the situation from a

practical standpoint, I don't see how such a thing could possibly happen.

TRAVERS. And about Mann's ghost, do you . . .

DARBY. No, no. I said that just for Charlie's benefit, but . . . (*He gazes at the window up center and speaks hauntingly.*) but what if he should . . .

TRAVERS. Oh, come now.

DARBY (*excitedly*). You don't believe me, Travers; you couldn't. But let me tell you this: all those who were here two years ago believe in what I'm trying to struggle against believing, that George Mann will return. (*Charlie enters unnoticed and goes to desk, down right.*) No, you couldn't believe that; you didn't hear him whisper over and over again when he was dying, "God will avenge my death." I tell you, Travers, one can't help being frightened by something like that.

TRAVERS. I see. Slowly, but surely, I'm piecing this story together.

CHARLIE (*concentrating on the desk, and suddenly blurt-ing out in a monotone*). He won't come back!

(*Travers and Darby both glance toward the desk, down left.*)

DARBY. What did you say, Charlie?

CHARLIE (*nervously*). I said he won't come back. (*Rises.*) He can't come back! He's dead!

DARBY. Charlie, take it easy. (*Walks to clerk's desk, down left.*) You have a none too good heart, you know. Now, what were you trying to say?

CHARLIE (*sits*). You know what I was talking about.

DARBY. Yes. (*Rather flippantly.*) I think I do, Charlie.  
I think I do. (*He goes to chair, center.*) Well, Travers,  
my theory is off to a good start. Two of the six have  
returned; only four more . . .

CHARLIE (*looking up from his desk*). Three more!

DARBY (*whirling to face him*). Oh, then you too have  
some faith in this return business?

CHARLIE. I said nothing like that.

DARBY. You implied as much.

CHARLIE. I meant it was possible for only three to return.

DARBY (*turning again to face down center*). We shall see,  
we shall see.

(*There is the sound of an auto horn offstage.*)

TRAVERS. That auto horn!

DARBY. Someone's outside waiting for Charlie to come  
help . . . Well, why don't you go, Charlie? (*Charlie  
slowly reaches for his slicker.*) Oh, don't be afraid!  
When he comes, he won't come in a car; dead people  
don't drive, you know.

CHARLIE. Oh, stop it!

(*Exits, up left.*)

TRAVERS. I say . . .!

DARBY. He doesn't like me, Travers. (*Laughs.*) I can't  
say I blame him.

TRAVERS. I do. I don't know what it is, but something  
is surely distracting the lad.

DARBY (*slowly and without emphasis*). H'mmmmm, yes;  
it's been that way for two years. (*Travers quickly gives  
the doctor a puzzled look. The doctor suddenly realizes*

*what he has said.*) I . . . I didn't mean exactly that, Travers. I didn't mean what you're thinking.

TRAVERS. What I am thinking?

DARBY. Oh . . . perhaps you . . . you didn't think what I imagined you would. Forget the whole thing, will you, Travers?

TRAVERS. Yes, surely. *(He turns his head toward the fireplace with a puzzled expression.)*

DARBY. Thank you.

*(Enter Charlie with bags, followed by Murphy, also carrying a bag.)*

MURPHY. Set them here for the moment, Charlie. I just saw another car drive up that you'd better attend to.

*(Charlie puts down the bags, looks at Murphy a moment, then exits up left. Murphy stands gazing at the entrance, then turns down center just in time to meet the gaze of Doctor Darby, who has risen from his chair center. Travers again resumes reading.)*

DARBY. Hello there!

MURPHY *(enthusiastically surprised)*. Why, if it isn't good old Doctor Darby! *(Comes down stage and shakes hands with Darby.)* It surely is good to see you.

DARBY. Is it?

MURPHY *(glancing into the eyes of Darby, then to the floor)*. Let's forget all that. *(Sullenly.)* The Lord knows I wouldn't have stopped here tonight if it weren't for the storm. It's terrible!

DARBY. The storm or . . . the Inn?

MURPHY. Both. *(Walking to fireplace.)* By George,

that fire looks good! Almost any shelter looks good on a night like this. Say, Doctor, what's wrong with Charlie? He used to be so jolly, and cheerful. Now . . . well, he hardly spoke to me; pretended not to know me at first.

DARBY. I know. He's becoming unbearable.

MURPHY. How has Jonathan been doing here lately?

DARBY. He's had more business tonight than he's had for weeks.

MURPHY. Yes? Who else is here? Anybody I might know?

DARBY. The Spinwell sisters drove in just a few minutes ago, not of their own accord, however.

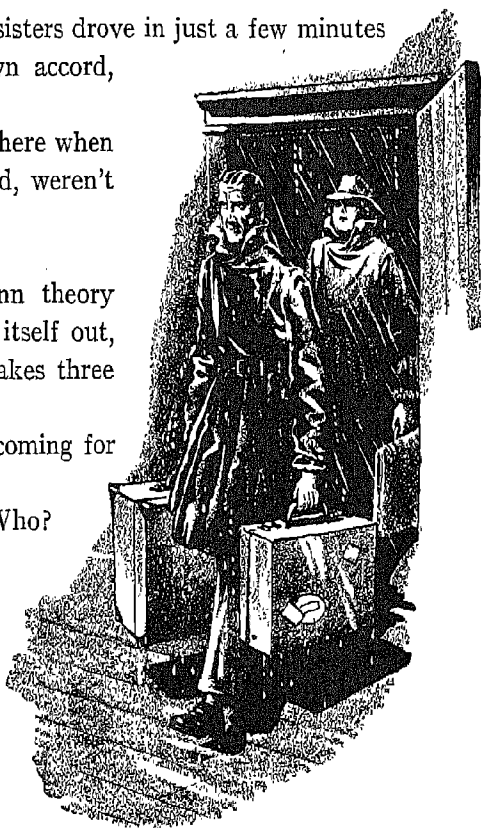
MURPHY. They were here when . . . when it happened, weren't they?

DARBY. Yes.

MURPHY. The old Inn theory seems to be bearing itself out, doesn't it? That makes three of us on deck.

DARBY. And another coming for sure.

MURPHY. That so? Who?



DARBY. Do you remember a fellow named Kennedy?

MURPHY. Kennedy? Kennedy? (*musings over the name*).

Kennedy? Actor, wasn't he?

DARBY. Yes, an itinerant actor. I 'phoned him earlier in the evening, and he promised me he'd drive down.

MURPHY. But such a night to travel! I hope he doesn't have to go far.

DARBY (*smiling*). I don't think he'll mind the rain, Murphy. In fact, I . . . I think he's rather pleased.

MURPHY (*glances at Darby with a look of bewilderment*).

He was a rather queer chap. (*Enter Charlie with Randall.*) Randall! (*Goes to Randall up left and shakes hands.*) So it was you following me for the last twenty-five miles!

(*At the mention of the name Randall, Darby glances toward Travers on the davenport, who puts down his book and holds up four fingers. Darby nods.*)

RANDALL. Hello, Pat!

MURPHY. You remember Doc Darby, don't you?

(*Comes down center with Randall.*)

RANDALL. Is he still here?

DARBY (*rising*). Yes, with one leg in the grave.

RANDALL (*enthusiastically*). Hello Doctor! How you doing?

(*Charlie takes bags, and goes to clerk's desk, down right.*)

MURPHY. You know, Doc, Randall and I have become "bosom buddies" since we met two years ago.

DARBY. That's possible enough. I can think of no time



in the history of this Inn when the guests became so friendly toward each other as they did after that tragedy. The sympathetic feeling of those concerned seemed to unite them.

MURPHY. All of which reminds me, Randall; your coming means that all of the doubtful guests have arrived.

RANDALL. You mean they're all here? The Spinwell sisters? Kennedy, the actor?

MURPHY. Well, no, Kennedy hasn't arrived yet, but Doc promises he will. All the rest are here, and when Kennedy arrives that will make five of us.

RANDALL (*solemnly*). Five who saw the sixth put in such a position that he couldn't return. Or . . . can he? (*There is a deathly silence for a moment.*)

RANDALL (*slowly and reminiscently*). What he looked like! He was lying on his back; there was a crowd standing around doing nothing but "Oh"ing and "Ah"ing, and constantly closing in on the corpse. And then, Doctor, I saw you turn over the body. The face was hideous, all covered with blood from the mouth. I remember you pulling up his coat collar, so the rest of us couldn't see his face. A woman fainted.

CHARLIE (*hysterically*). Please! Please! Don't talk about it!

RANDALL (*softly*). All right, Charlie.

DARBY (*with a note of sarcasm*). It's his heart; he can't stand much conversation on that subject.

MURPHY. Let's change it.

RANDALL. I'm agreed. (*Pause.*) But speaking of my following you, Murphy, reminds me of something that happened to me that appeared to be rather strange.

MURPHY. Yes? What was it?

(*Goes to chair down left, by fireplace.*)

RANDALL (*sitting on left side of davenport, opposite Travers*). There was a car following me also. Sometimes it was right behind me, and then it would drop back for a distance of say . . . five hundred feet.

MURPHY. And that's queer?

RANDALL. Oh, but wait! About a mile from here, that car completely disappeared.

MURPHY. Possibly turned into a crossroad.

RANDALL. No, that's what's funny. There was no crossroad; I'm positive of that.

MURPHY. He might have stopped and turned off his lights.

DARBY. Do you think that's logical, on a night like this?

MURPHY. No, it isn't. Unless he had car trouble.

RANDALL. That isn't what startled me so much as did the man driving.

DARBY. Drunk?

RANDALL. Oh, no, nothing like that; it was his looks. Just before the car disappeared from my view, he turned off his lights. At the same time I glanced up in the mirror and . . . saw him lighting a cigarette. The match illuminated his face; only once before have I ever seen a face anywhere near as hideous as that was. It . . . it wasn't human.

DARBY (*with a fixed expression*). I think we're going to have a sixth guest tonight . . . a return guest.

CHARLIE. You're wrong! It can't be he!

MURPHY (*turning around to face Charlie, at the desk*). Who?

CHARLIE. You know who I mean. Such things don't happen. (*Murphy looks at him for a moment, then shrugs and turns around. Darby rises and goes to window, up center.*)

DARBY (*talking with his back to the audience*). They say history repeats itself. It's surely doing just that tonight. This is an identical storm to the one exactly two years ago. (*A flash of lightning illuminates the forest in the background.*) Randall! Murphy! Come here a moment! (*They rise and go up center with Dr. Darby.*) Look down the road! See anything?

MURPHY. I can't.

RANDALL. I can't either. (*The lightning flashes a little.*)

I can see something . . . a figure walking alone . . .

MURPHY. I saw it too. Did you notice *how* he was walking? Not like a human would walk in a storm like this! He's walking as if it were a bright Sunday afternoon.

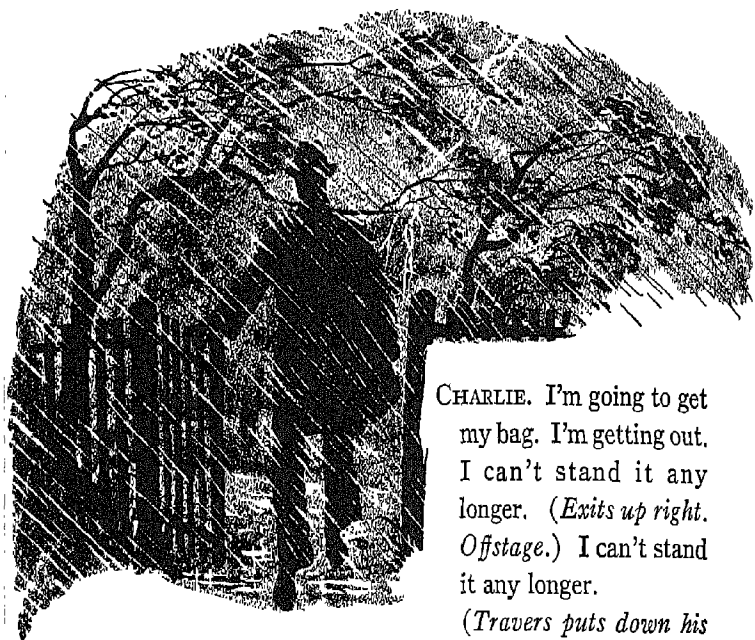
DARBY. He's turning in here.

CHARLIE (*rushes to window*). Oh, it can't be!

MURPHY. He's surely coming fast, for the slow steps he's taking.

(*Charlie turns and starts up right.*)

DARBY. Charlie, where you going?



CHARLIE. I'm going to get my bag. I'm getting out. I can't stand it any longer. (*Exits up right. Offstage.*) I can't stand it any longer.

(*Travers puts down his*

*book, rises, and walks up center.*)

TRAVERS. I say, Doctor, what's happening?

DARBY. He's coming in. He mustn't know we're all watching him. Let's get back to where we were sitting. (*They all take the places they formerly had.*)

RANDALL (*with a rasping throat*). I was a fool to come here tonight.

(*There is a terrific flash of lightning, followed shortly by an equally terrific rumble of thunder. Steps are heard in the hall. Then in the partially dark entrance up left a lone figure presents himself. He is wearing an old black topcoat, the collar closely drawn around his neck. The brim of his hat is drawn down, covering the upper portion of his face, the LOWER PORTION! . . . IT'S HORRIBLE! His face is a deathly white, except for the appearance of*

*dried blood around the mouth and collar. He stands in the doorway a moment, none of the men seated down stage daring to look back. With noiseless steps, this ghastly creature crosses to the clerk's desk down left, goes behind it, and picks the number five key from the rack. Then, as quietly as he entered, he exits up right. There is a pause.*

DARBY (*nervously*). Well?

MURPHY. It was he.

RANDALL. This isn't possible.

DARBY. Did you notice his getting the number five key?

There's no mistake.

MURPHY. I can't believe it. I won't believe it.

(*Pause. Charlie rushes in carrying his bag. He is completely out of breath.*)

CHARLIE (*frantically*). I saw him! I saw him!

DARBY (*rising quickly, and grabbing Charlie by the arm*).

Sit down and calm yourself.

CHARLIE. I can't. I'm getting out of here. Let go of my arm!

DARBY (*forcing him into the chair center*). Now listen, Charlie, you're dreaming. You said yourself that it was impossible for him to return.

CHARLIE. Let me go, you fool! You can stay here if you want. I'm getting out. He's up in his old room now.

DARBY. What if he should be? What are *you* afraid of? George Mann is dead. It's only your conscience that's making him live.

CHARLIE. Conscience? I didn't steal 'em.

DARBY. No?

CHARLIE (*hysterically, just as the figure enters, up right*).

Oh, please, let me go! Let me go! Let me go!

DARBY (*as the figure slowly draws nearer*). It is George Mann. Only he's dead . . .

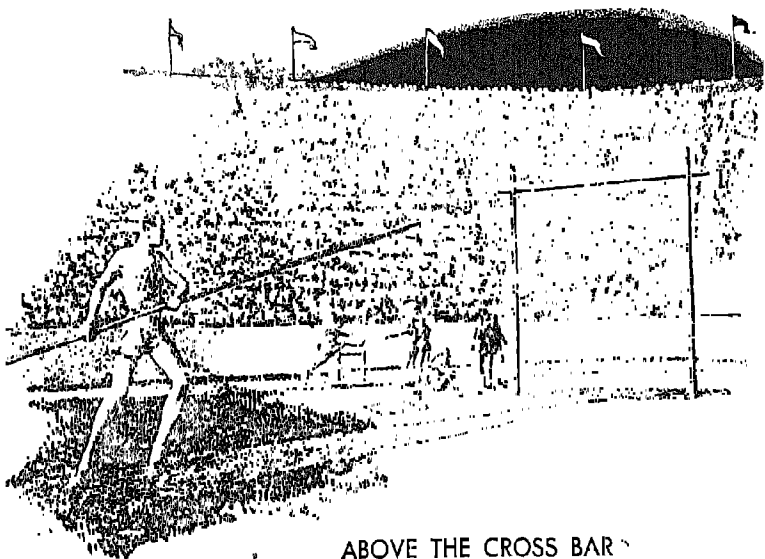
CHARLIE (*dropping to the floor, and clutching the knees of Dr. Darby. He sobs*). I stole them! I stole them! I stole them! Don't let him come any nearer! He'll kill me. He wants revenge. Tell him I'm guilty. Tell the whole world I'm guilty. But don't let him . . .

(*He chokes, and drops to the floor. The doctor is immediately down on his knees examining the prostrate form. Everything is quiet; even the figure has stopped moving.*)

DARBY (*softly and slowly*). He's dead. Heart failure. (*Slowly all rise except the doctor, who is still on his knees.*) The death of George Mann is avenged. (*To the figure.*) Kennedy, you played your greatest role tonight. (*All start at the mention of the figure's being Kennedy.*) Travers, (*The doctor rises.*) that's your story.

TRAVERS (*slowly shaking his bowed head*). I shall never write it! Never!

CURTAIN



### ABOVE THE CROSS BAR \*

*It takes a fire and a family of airdales to show Carlton Rand that pole vaulting is done with the mind as well as the body.*

by Harold M. Sherman

Up went the cross bar to *fourteen* feet! Members of Weston College's track team held their breaths. Carlton Rand, their star pole vaulter, was about to attempt this height. In practice, he had gone to thirteen feet, ten inches, time and again, but *fourteen* feet had stopped him.

"He's up against a mental hazard!" whispered Ralph Baker, team sprinter. "I know. I've had the same feeling when I've been trying to run against the clock. He figured he had this pole vault event salted away till State's Jim Eller topped fourteen feet in that Meet last Saturday!"

"Yeah—doesn't look so good for us," admitted Ben

\* By permission of the author, and courtesy of *Boys' Life*, published by the Boy Scouts of America.

Nathan, shot putter. "I thought we had an outside chance to take the Big Five Meet but if we can't count on Carlton's bringing us five points in the pole vault——"

"Let's see what he's going to do on this jump!"

All eyes turned on Weston's lithe athlete as Carlton Rand paused at the end of the runway, wiped his hands on a towel, and gripped his bamboo vaulting pole. He stood eyeing the cross bar, outlined against the sky beyond.

Coach Don Brady nibbled anxiously at a piece of grass as he watched. This was the last stiff practice session before the Meet and if Carlton could crack this height just once, it ought to give him the confidence he needed to match whatever State's Jim Eller might do.

Now, he was lifting the pole, pointing it down the runway, poising himself for the start.

"He's off!"

With every member of the track squad silently rooting, Carlton sped down the runway, strides growing longer and longer. Approaching the jump standards, he jabbed his pole into the take-off hole and sprang upwards. But his spring did not have the same drive as his former vaults and his body struck the bar on the rise. He sprawled into the sand pit, having lost all semblance of form.

"See that!" said Ralph. "You'd think he was a beginner. But, if we could slip the bar to fourteen feet without his knowing it, till afterwards, he'd go over it as easy as he does thirteen, ten. Unless Carlton can do something about that mental hurdle between now and the Meet, he's cooked!"



"And we are, too!" added Bill Groder, distance runner.

Carlton, sitting in the pit, looked up at the standards and shook his head, disconsolately.

"Put that bar up again!" Carlton ordered. "I'm going to try it over!"

But there was desperation in his voice rather than assurance. And the next try was almost the same as the last. He sent the cross bar spinning into space as he hurtled into it and went tumbling into the pit.

"Lower the bar to thirteen-ten!" instructed Coach Brady. "Apparently, Carlton, that's your ceiling. I want to see if you can top it once more."

"I don't feel much like it, Coach. Those two tries took a lot out of me."

"This is your last jump tonight. Thirteen-ten—make it good!"

Scowling determinedly, but with attitude more relaxed, the fellow who was stumped at fourteen feet, moved back up the runway to the starting point. He turned about, gripped his pole and, without pausing, commenced his run.

Carlton's take-off was perfect; his muscular arms pulled his body up the pole; it was evident he had miraculously recovered his form. As he lifted over the bar, he deftly shoved the pole from him, turned his body and dropped cleanly into the pit.

"He made it!"

"And with inches to spare!" observed Ralph. "Isn't that a crime?"

Carlton, grinning now, picked up his pole.

"I'd begun to wonder if I could jump at all," he said to Coach Brady, as he started toward the field house.

"Just wanted to prove to you that your trouble is mental," was Coach Brady's answer. "You were far enough above that bar to have cleared fourteen feet. Why is it that thirteen-ten doesn't look high to you and fourteen feet *does?*"

Carlton's face sobered. "If I could tell you that, I could lick this thing. Gosh, I hope that Jim Eller can't hit fourteen again in the Big Five Meet! I'm afraid, if he does."

The Big Five Meet was held every year at the State capital, with five outstanding colleges and universities competing. Certain trial heats in events were run off on Friday with the finals on Saturday. But the pole vault event was scheduled for Saturday only. Weston's track team, fifteen strong, was put up at the Town and Country Club, two miles from the city. There was rejoicing Friday evening, as Weston had succeeded in placing at least one man in the finals of every event which had been run off.

"State's the outfit we've got to beat, just as we figured!" said Ralph, who had won his two heats in the hundred and two-hundred-yard dashes. "And we're going to need every point we can manage to stay with 'em!"

"Yeah," said Ben, "and Carlton's been biting his finger nails all day."

"Not *quite* all day," Ralph added. "He's been playing around with the care-taker's airedale dog! Making him

jump over fences and hedges."

"Probably studying his jumping form," kidded Bill Groder.

"If that's the case, he picked the wrong kind of dog," grinned Ben. "We should get him a greyhound."

"Well, it's probably helping keep his mind off tomorrow," opined Bill. "Where's he now?"

"Out with the *dog!*" said Ralph.

"Well, I'll be *doggonned!*" said Bill, and was promptly sat upon by fellow team-mates.

When Weston's sole hope in the pole vault came in to dinner he was joshed by the squad. "What have you been doing? Teaching Sport to take your place tomorrow?" Ben wanted to know.

"Say, you've got that poor dog so worn out now, he couldn't jump over his shadow," said Bill.

"He's a great canine," smiled Carlton. "I always liked airedales. Mr. Atwood, he's the care-taker, is going to give me one of Sport's puppies. Sport, you know, is a proud father!"

"Well, well!" exclaimed Ralph. "And where's Mama Airedale?"

"She's upstairs in the attic of the care-taker's house. Mr. Atwood has fitted it up for Sport and his family."

"Behold, fellows, a dog fancier in our midst!" pro-



claimed Bill. "He's forgotten all about the track meet. Probably threw away his vaulting pole."

"No, that's downstairs in the check room," laughed Carlton. "And I just managed to get it in there, too."

"Well, you'd better not lose the check because you may need that pole tomorrow," geyed Ben. "I doubt if you can make fourteen feet without it!"

"*Fourteen feet!*" said Carlton, impulsively.

"To bed early, all of you!" ordered Coach Brady.

Carlton wasn't able to sleep. He occupied a double room with Ralph, who apparently hadn't a nerve in his body, for while Carlton was still wide awake, Ralph had been sleeping soundly for several hours. A light at the side entrance to the Country Club cast a slight flickering reflection across the ceiling of the room. Carlton had been lying in bed, staring at the vague shadows as they came and went. But now, was it his imagination, or was this flicker of light on the ceiling growing stronger? Developing a somewhat reddish tinge? Carlton sat up in bed. He raised the window curtain and looked out. As he did so, there came a frightened cry from the care-taker's house.

"Fire!"

Carlton was out of bed in a bound and into his shoes. He was attired in his shirt and shorts. Without waiting to put on other clothes, he raced for the door.

"Hey, hey, what's up?" Ralph called dazedly after him.

"Mr. Atwood's house is burning!" Carlton flung back as he ran into the hall and down the stairs.

Screams of fire had awakened Weston's track team and

even in this short time, flames had burst from the windows, lighting up the place like day.

Outside, a frantic Mr. Atwood was rushing up to phone the city fire department.

"Get that hose line inside the club!" he called. "See if it'll reach my house! It'll take ten minutes for the department to get out here!"

Things happened fast in the next few minutes as everyone pitched in to do what could be done. Mrs. Atwood and several Country Club helpers who roomed at the house tried to save some of the furniture.

"Sport! The dogs!" cried Carlton, suddenly. "Where are they?"

"Oh!" exclaimed a distracted Mrs. Atwood. "They're all up in the attic and we can't get to them. The back stairs are all ablaze!"

Running to the side of the house, Carlton looked up. The attic window was partially open, with smoke pouring out.

"Sport!" he called, and whistled.

A choked whine came from above and Sport's head appeared at the window.

"Gee, those poor dogs!" said Ralph, hurrying up. "Where's a ladder?"

"It's locked in the tool house!" said Mr. Atwood. "And the key's in my clothes! We'll have to break down the door!"

"Wait!" shouted Carlton. "Get a blanket out of that automobile, you guys! I'll be right back!"

Cutting across the lawn, Carlton rushed into the clubhouse. A trembling night clerk opened the check room and let Carlton drag out his vaulting pole. He ran with it through the lobby, banging it against doors and porch pillars as he jumped from the veranda.

"Good night!" cried an amazed Ralph. "Look at Carlton!"

"Stand back, fellows! Out of my way!" directed Weston's pole vaulter as he sized up the height between ground and window.

"Say, Carlton, you can't get up to that attic!" said Ben, grabbing his arm. "It's too dangerous, anyhow. Looks like the upstairs floor is going to cave in any minute!"

"Let me go! I'm going to make a try for it!"

Carlton jabbed a hole in the lawn for his pole. Then he ran back across the grass toward the clubhouse, his way lighted by the flames crackling up around the rear of the house. He looked, in his shirt and shorts, as though he were attired for the track meet.

"Here comes the fire department!"

Far in the distance, down the state highway, could be heard the scream of a siren and the clang of bells.

"If I make the window," Carlton called, "I'll try to get inside and get the puppies! You guys hold that blanket."

Weston's pole vaulter was off, dashing toward the burning house. Coach Brady emerged from the clubhouse just in time to see a white-clad figure leave the ground, propelled upward through smoke and flames, feet kicking skyward as a bamboo pole swayed toward the side of the

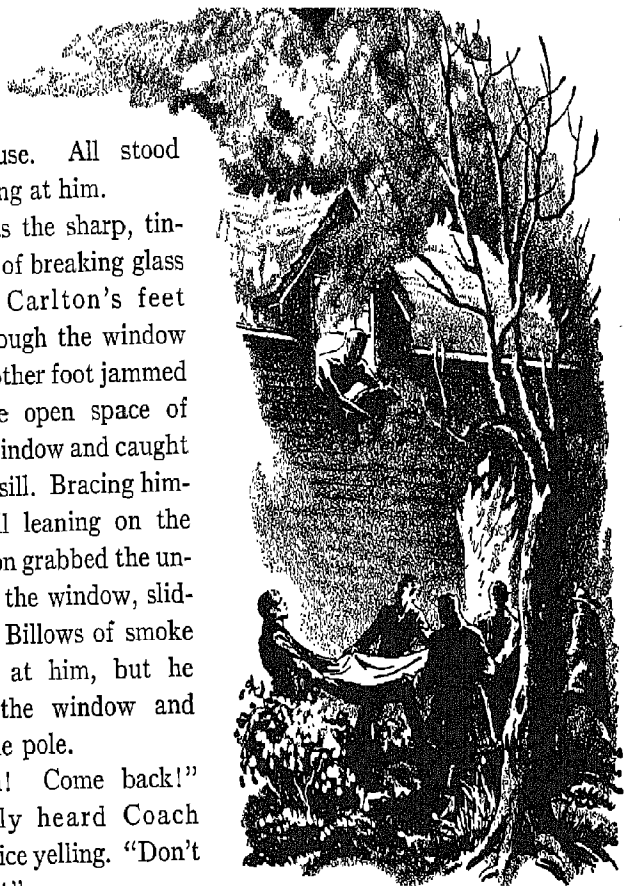
burning house. All stood aghast looking at him.

There was the sharp, tinkling sound of breaking glass as one of Carlton's feet crashed through the window pane. The other foot jammed through the open space of the raised window and caught against the sill. Bracing himself by still leaning on the pole, Carlton grabbed the under side of the window, sliding it up. Billows of smoke rolled out at him, but he straddled the window and dropped the pole.

"Carlton! Come back!" he vaguely heard Coach Brady's voice yelling. "Don't go in there!"

But he was already groping about on the floor, a floor that was uncomfortably hot. There was a crackling roar beneath him. He felt the body of Sport rub against him, a low whimpering sound, and a tongue against his cheek. The next instant, Carlton's hands felt the cot on which was huddled the form of the mother airedale, shielding her puppies.

"There, boy! You're all right!" Carlton murmured, and regretted it, because smoke got in his throat.



He gathered the four quivering puppies in his arms and crept back to the window.

"Here they are!" he called.

Below Ben and Bill and Ralph were holding a car blanket. He dropped the squirming puppies one by one and saw them plucked from the robe by Coach Brady.

Reaching around, he grabbed the mother airedale who had followed him to the window, lifted her over the window sill and dropped her.

Whew, it was hot!

"Now, Sport!"

Sport didn't want to go. Carlton had a tussle with him and finally pushed him out. Forced to jump for it, Sport hit the blanket, feet first, almost knocking its holders down.

"Okay, Carlton! You're next!" shouted Ralph. "Get out of there!"

"Don't try to catch me!" warned Carlton.

He saw he would have to jump away from the burning house as flames were snaking up the side. But the lawn was softly sodded and he knew how to fall.

He jumped, struck in a crouching position, rolled over and bounded to his feet, unhurt.

"Good work, Carlton!" gasped a greatly relieved Coach Brady, "but you shouldn't have risked it!"

"Those dogs, coach! I couldn't stand by and see them——"

As he spoke, the fire trucks arrived. Two lines of hose were laid from city mains. The flames were confined to the back of the house. This was thoroughly gutted, part



of the attic floor collapsing before the blaze could be extinguished.

Looking up at the charred window which Carlton had entered, Coach Brady suddenly cried out: "Say, fellows, wait here just a minute. I'm going inside."

Presently, aided by the Fire Chief, he reached the attic and, looking down upon his wondering squad members, unwound a steel tape line and dropped an end of it.

"Grab that line, Carlton, and hold it against the ground!"

Weston's pole vaulter did as he had been directed. He gazed up at the coach who consulted the tape, then whistled in amazement.

"Hey, do you realize how high this window is from down there?"

"No," said Carlton. "But I'd say about twelve feet!"

"Twelve feet," exploded Coach Brady. "It's *fourteen feet, two inches!*"

It was then that Carlton Rand, who'd never been able to vault fourteen feet, almost keeled over from shock!

In the long history of Big Five track competition, there had never been such a duel for the championship as State University and Weston College put on. First one team went ahead and then the other. And, finally, because the pole vault competition had been toughest of all, it remained the last event on the track program with State and Weston tied in points, 39 to 39, Jim Eller and Carlton Rand being the contesting pole vaulters. The two had been running true to form in eliminating the rest of the

field and now they were kicking their way skyward, each frenziedly trying to outdo the other.

"Bar's at thirteen feet, ten!" said Ralph. "Boy, I hope Jim Eller can't go beyond this height today!"

It was Jim Eller's turn to jump, and State's superb vaulter was poised confidently on the runway.

"Well, Carlton," he called to his lone opponent. "The boys tell me that here's where we part company. Too bad! I've enjoyed meeting you."

And, with this defiant taunt, Jim Eller ran gracefully down the runway, gathering speed until he was fairly sprinting. He set his pole, swung up and over, twisting in mid-air and falling into the pit, landing on all fours.

"Pretty!" cried Bill, as Weston's squad turned to their team-mate, upon whom the outcome of the Meet now hung. "Come on, Carlton—stay with him!"

But Weston's pole vaulter appeared nervous and tense. He made a false start and retraced his steps. Then he was off, but he didn't quite clear on his first jump.

Jim Eller, now sitting on the sidelines, grinned. He'd made Carlton's top recorded height and it was up to Carlton to clear thirteen feet, ten in one of two jumps left or the event went to Eller, and with it the track meet to State.

Carlton's second attempt was no better than his first. He came back down the runway, a dejected young man. Then Weston supporters watched Carlton take off on his last try. He went up, not in the best of form, squirmed over the bar, just touched it, and fell sideways into the pit. The bar wavered as Carlton rolled on his back and looked up at it but it did not fall off.

"You lucky stiff," laughed Jim Eller, getting up and throwing off his sweater. "Here goes the bar to fourteen feet! Let's see you follow me now!"

A hush had come over the big crowd as the day's most dramatic moment arrived. Jim Eller seemed to appreciate the tensity of the situation. He even appeared to be waiting unduly long for the unnerving effect it might be having upon his rival.

When he finally took off, everyone stopped breathing for a second.

"He's over!" cried someone, excitedly.

But the cry was premature. Jim Eller had skimmed the bar, in clearing, and had whisked it off, for his first miss of the day!

"I slipped, but I'll get it next time," he announced to Carlton on his way back.

Carlton nodded, hardly hearing what was said to him. He was eyeing the bar as it was slipped once more in place, almost at the top of the standards.

"Gosh, that's high!" he said to himself, and felt nervous perspiration break out upon the palms of his hands. He wiped them against his shirt front and gripped his pole. "Well, here goes!"

Bounding off down the runway, he swung up into space, but his timing was wrong and his jump half-hearted. He hit the bar on the way up and dropped into the pit, the bar striking him on the head as it came down.

"Same old story!" mourned Ben. "He's through!"

"I'm sorry I have to do this!" said Jim, in a low voice to Carlton.

"More power to you if you've got it in you," was Carlton's reply.

"Watch this!" invited Jim Eller.

Holding the pole with the point well down in front, State's vaulter started down the runway. He was covering the ground almost effortlessly and going at great speed when he jabbed his pole into the take-off hole and shot his body into the air. It was a magnificent try, but still not quite good enough. His arm ticked the bar as he released the pole; the bar trembled and slid off the pegs.

"Oh! Too bad!" sighed the crowd, in disappointment.

Jim Eller, rising from the pit, shook his fist at the top of the standards, which brought a roar of laughter. Here was a natural athlete, one who didn't take himself too seriously. One who refused to be depressed by failure.

"My own fault that time!" Jim analyzed, as he neared Carlton, who was getting in position for his second try.

"You deserve to have made it," complimented Carlton, wetting dry lips.

"Thanks," said Jim. "Good luck to you!"

But the old hazard was there and the form was gone. He scarcely got his body into the air and sent the bar flying by contact with his pole.

"Gee, he's gone to pieces entirely!" groaned Ralph. "I only hope Eller doesn't make good on his last attempt. If he does, Carlton can't tie him in a million years!"

"But, if Eller misses we get out of this meet with no worse than a tie," reminded Bill.

"Which isn't enough!" declared Ralph, spiritedly. "We

had our hearts set on winning this meet! Carlton, snap out of it! You can do better than that!"

Carlton, hearing Ralph's exhortation, shook his head, sadly. He was making a sorry showing and he couldn't help himself.

"All right, Eller! Let's go!" called a State fan.

And Jim Eller, self-assured and determined, nodded, as he started. This time he would go over. He'd give the crowd the thrill of thrills and win, in the same leap, the meet for his team.

It appeared that he was over but some part of his body must have touched the bar on the way down. It shook violently and tumbled off the pegs as Jim Eller sat in the pit and looked up at it. He threw a handful of sand from him in keen disappointment but the crowd cheered him wildly for three great tries.

"Wow!" yelled Ralph, elated. "So the great Eller couldn't make *fourteen* feet! There's still a chance for Carlton!"

Weston rooters, gone wild, set up a clamor, imploring their pole vaulter to accomplish what his competitor had failed to do.

"I—I wish I could!" Carlton said to himself, as he walked out on the runway for his last attempt. "I'd give anything if I could!"

"Hey, Carlton!" It was Ralph's voice shouting at him above the tumult. Ralph, making a megaphone of his hands, standing down beyond the pit, with Weston's whole track squad. "We don't want a tie, old boy! We want

this meet! And you can do it! What's the matter—do we have to build a fire under you to get you to jump?"

And at that moment somewhere off in the distance a dog barked. It sounded like Sport.

Fire! Carlton's mind suddenly reverted to the events of last night. But what was this Weston's entire track squad had started shrieking? Carlton listened, not certain that he had heard aright.

*"Oh, fireman—save my chee-ild!"*

Despite himself and the seriousness of the moment, Carlton grinned. Thought they were funny, didn't they! Fireman—save their child! . . . Yeah, their child was the championship. He laughed outright. That helped. Somehow, Carlton felt relaxed inside, felt the same determination surge within that had keyed him up and had enabled him to——

As he swung himself up into the air at the take-off, the bar above became the window ledge. But he mustn't touch it with his feet this time. He must, somehow, pull himself up and over it. This was the only way that this particular fireman could save Weston's *chee-ild*! He must shoot through that paneless window between the two standards, without touching a thing. And there was plenty of room to do that, if he could only lift his body high enough—all the room between window sill and sky! Carlton had a fleeting glance at the bar under him as he sailed over, turning in air and thrusting the pole from him. A mad feeling of exultation welled up inside him as realization came that he had cleared the window sill with inches

to spare. But there wasn't any floor to land on, no attic filled with smoke and nothing but a nice, long drop down, down, into the basement with the nearest approach to smoke a cloud of sand, as he struck in the vaulter's pit.

"You've done it! You've done it!" joy-crazed Weston track-mates were singing in his ears, as eager hands lifted him to his feet and up on his classmates' shoulders.

Carlton, rubbing his eyes, glanced nervously up, to assure himself that the window sill—the bar—was still there!

"Where's the chee-ild?" a laughing Ralph was demanding. "What a volunteer fireman you turned out to be!"

"There's the chee-ild, over there!" interrupted Carlton, and pointed to the scoreboard, as the final figures went up.

Weston 44. State 43.

## THE COWBOY'S LIFE

by James Barton Adams

The bawl of a steer,  
To a cowboy's ear,  
Is music of sweetest strain;  
And the yelping notes  
Of the grey coyotes  
To him are a glad refrain.

And his jolly song  
Speeds him along,  
As he thinks of the little gal

With golden hair  
Who is waiting there  
At the bars of the home corral.

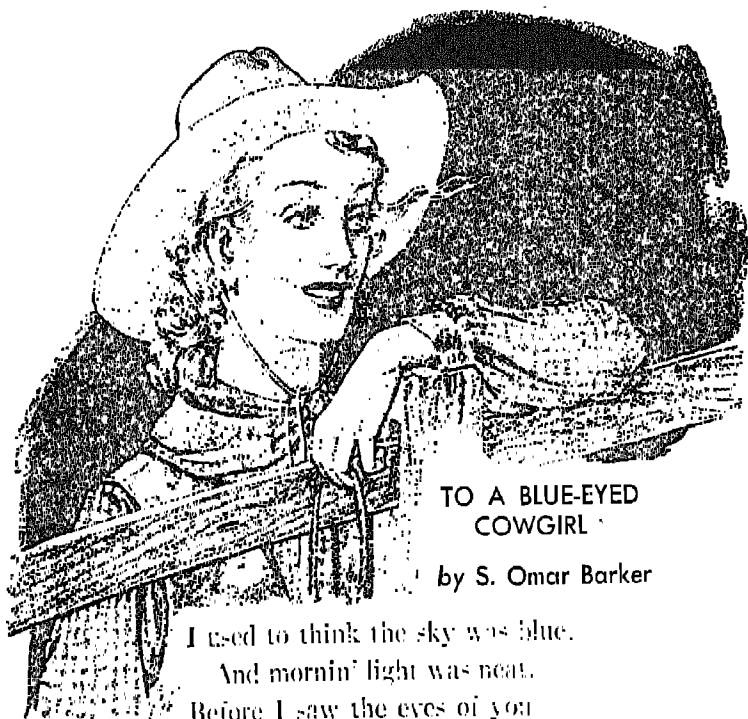
For a kingly crown  
In the noisy town  
His saddle he wouldn't change;  
No life so free  
As the life we see  
'Way out on the Yaso range.

His eyes are bright,  
And his heart as light  
As the smoke of his cigarette;  
There's never a care  
For his soul to bear,  
No trouble to make him fret.

The rapid beat  
Of his broncho's feet  
On the sod as he speeds along,  
Keeps living time  
To the ringing rhyme  
Of his rollicking cowboy song.

The winds may blow  
And the thunder growl  
Or the breezes may safely moan;—  
A cowboy's life  
Is the royal life,  
His saddle his kingly throne.





TO A BLUE-EYED  
COWGIRL

by S. Omar Barker

I used to think the sky was blue.  
And mornin' light was neat.  
Before I saw the eyes of you  
Sun-smilin' clean and sweet.  
But now . . . gee whiskers . . . I don't know—  
Somehow the things I see  
In your blue eyes jest seem to glow  
With happiness fer me!

Seems like I see the spring sky there,  
An' twilight soft and gray.  
An' cabin smoke curled in the air  
That quiet kind of way  
It sometimes does from happy homes  
Back in the grassy hills.

\* By permission of the author.

To sech like things my fancy roams,  
My heart with wishin' fills.

Jest seein' things, there in your eyes,  
I never dreamed before.

A little ranch—not much fer size—  
You, waitin' at the door.

Or mebbe on my pinto hoss  
Some days you'd come an' ride—  
I'd be the foreman, you the boss,  
Trail-driftin' side by side.

One time "sky blue" meant sky to me.  
Now, it's the eyes of you  
All full of happy things to be  
An' dreams we'll make come true.

### SONG OF SUMMER \*

*by Paul Laurence Dunbar*

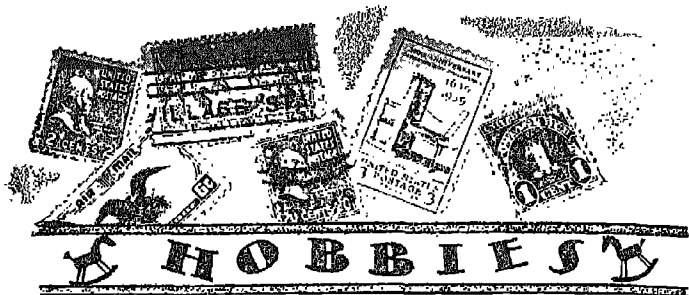
Dis is gospel weathah sho'—  
Hills is sawt o' hazy.  
Meddahs level ez a flo'  
Callin' to de lazy.  
Sky all white wit streaks o' blue  
Sunshine softly gleamin',  
D'ain't no wuk hit's right to do,  
Nuthin' 's right but dreamin'.

\* Used by permission of Dodd, Mead & Company, Inc.

Dreamin' by de rivah side  
Wit de watahs glist'nin',  
Feelin' good an' satisfied  
Ez you lay a-list'nin'  
To the little nakid boys  
Splashin' in de watah,  
Hollerin' fu' to spress deir joys  
Jes' lak youngsters ought to.

Squir'l a-tippin' on his toes,  
So's to hide an' view you;  
Whole flocks o' camp-meetin' crows  
Shoutin' hallelujah.  
Peckahwood erpon de tree  
Tappin' lak a hammah;  
Jaybird chattin' wit a bee,  
Tryin' to teach him grammah.

Breeze is blowin' wit perfume,  
Jes' enough to tease you;  
Hollyhocks is all in bloom  
Smellin' fu' to please you.  
Go 'way, folks, an' let me 'lone  
Times is gettin' dearah—  
Summah's settin' on de th'one  
An' I'm a-layin' neah huh!



## THE STORY BEHIND THE STAMP

Most of us think of a stamp as a bit of colored paper with a picture on one side and some glue on the other. We buy a stamp only when we need one to send away, and we get rid of it as soon as we possibly can. In other words, we spend more time licking than looking!

Nevertheless there are many people to whom a stamp is interesting in itself. They are the boys and girls, or men and women, who collect stamps, either for profit or pleasure, or both. Stamps from Uruguay, Persia, the Orient, and British South Africa! Stamps from the Canal Zone, Alaska, New Zealand, and the Far East! Stamps too, bearing the portraits of the soldiers, scientists, and pioneers

who have changed the map of the world.

Did you know that the United States has printed a series of stamps with the Presidents' portraits? A series of Army and Navy stamps recording the great events of our military history? Stamps carrying the pictures of our great national monuments, as the Arlington Amphitheater and the Lincoln Memorial?

The following stories will help in the understanding of the meaning of the stamps which they describe. Perhaps the stories will interest you enough so that the next time you buy a stamp you'll look before you lick. You might even buy an extra stamp, and start your own collection!



## THE RAREST STAMP IN THE WORLD \*

by C. A. Howes

The history of the rarest stamp in the world, the one-cent magenta, 1856, of British Guiana, was recently printed in a London newspaper by the man who found it, Mr. L. Vernon Vaughan, who lived in Georgetown, British Guiana, at the time. Says Mr. Vaughan:

"Sixty-one years ago I unearthed it and sold it for six shillings. I was a boy at the time, not yet in my teens, and I had been bitten rather badly by the stamp-collecting craze, so that when I discovered a whole lot of old family letters, most of them bearing British Guiana stamps, I was delighted.

"The now famous stamp was on one of these envelopes, so I soaked it off and put it in my album. It was not there long, for just then I was getting sets of unused foreign stamps from a dealer in Bath, and I was so carried away by the beauty of them—some were from places I had never even heard of—that I decided to sell a number of my British Guiana stamps and get more of these lovely sets. On looking through my album I picked out the one-cent magenta because I did not think it a very good specimen, and also because I was sure I would find more just like it when next I took the trouble to search through the old family letters.

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"I had heard of a Mr. McKinnon, who was a keen collector, and so I took the stamp to him. At first he would not look at it, saying that it wasn't at all a good specimen and that anyway, he didn't like its eight-sided shape! (It is clipped across all four corners.) However, seeing my anxiety to get rid of it, he gave me six shillings, (about a dollar and a half) impressing on me that he was taking a great risk in buying it, and that he hoped I should appreciate his generosity. After keeping the stamp for ten years, he disposed of it for £25 (about one hundred and twenty-five dollars) on the London Market."

The great French collector, Philip von Ferrary, was the purchaser and the stamp was hidden away in his tremendous collection until it was seized by the French government during the World War. During the sale of art treasures in 1922, the stamp was bought by Arthur Hind of Utica, New York, and was publicly exhibited several times by him, once at the International Exhibition in New York in 1926. After Mr. Hind's death and the disposal by auction of his collection, it was supposed that the magenta stamp would again come upon the market and everyone was wondering who would be the next purchaser and what he would pay for it. But in this case Mrs. Hind stepped in and claimed it as her property. Her husband had given the stamp to her the day he bought it, and she did not wish to part with her husband's gift, which had become the rarest stamp in the world.



The Story behind the Stamp

## MEMORIES OF THE INCA \*

by C. A. Howes

Peru is gradually bringing out an excellent set of stamps to celebrate the founding of Lima, its capital. Lima was founded by Francisco Pizarro in January, 1535. The story of the Spanish conquest of Peru is almost unbelievable. Pizarro set out in 1531 with 183 men, 27 horses, and 2 small cannon,—to conquer the Inca, ruler of what was at that time one of the richest and most extensive empires of the world. The Empire of the Incas included the countries which now compose Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.

The Inca ruler, Huayno Capac, who had died seven years before the arrival of Pizarro, had left his empire divided between two of his sons, Atahualpa and Huascar. Their jealousies resulted in war. Though Huascar had been defeated and taken prisoner, trouble was still going on. Huascar's followers were still troubling the rule of Atahualpa, and weakening his control. This internal

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strife is what made possible the conquest by the Spaniards.

When Pizarro arrived in Peru he was the first white man the natives had ever seen. They were struck with amazement at the Spanish, their arms, and especially, their horses. They received the Spanish in a friendly way. However, the greed of the Spaniards was too great for peaceful bargaining. By treachery and double-dealing Pizarro gained control of the whole empire. He murdered the native rulers, plundered the land, temples and treasure houses as well as mines and stores of private wealth, and put his opponents to torture. This was probably the most extensive and most ruthless act of piracy the western world has ever seen.

The new Peruvian stamps carry pictures of the Indian rulers, the Spanish conquerors, and the funeral of Atahualpa, last of the Incas.

It is not only the beauty and fine workmanship of these stamps which makes them interesting to collectors, but the fact that the completed series will tell the story, in pictures, of the Spanish conquest of the ancient and treasure-laden Empire of the Incas.



A LAUGH FROM ARMENIA \*

by C. A. Howes

Once in a while we find a humorous story back of a stamp's design. Such a story comes to us from the ancient land of Armenia, oldest of all the Christian nations.

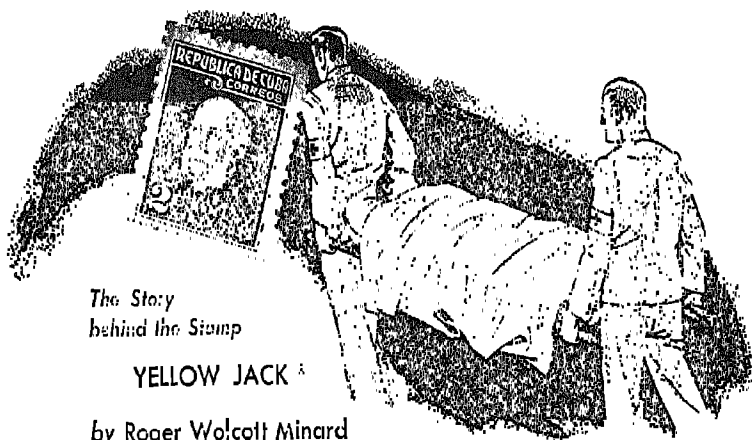
It seems that Mount Ararat, long held sacred by the Christian Armenians because it was believed to be the mountain on which the ark of Noah came to rest after the flood, was once a part of Armenia. Because it was a sacred mountain, and because it was a prominent feature of the Armenian landscape, the picture of Mount Ararat was chosen for an Armenian stamp.

In later years Mount Ararat was seized by the Turks. No sooner had they taken the holy mountain than the Turks began to complain about the Armenian stamps, saying that no country has a right to use the picture of a thing which it does not possess upon its stamps.

The Armenians, however, had no intention of giving up the picture of the mountain. They had the last word, too, because this was their reply:

"Perhaps the Turkish government is right. But is it any worse for us to use the picture of Mount Ararat, which is no longer ours, than it is for the Turks to use upon their stamps pictures of the sun, moon, and stars? How long have the sun, moon, and stars belonged to Turkey?"

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*The Story  
behind the Stamp*

## YELLOW JACK

by Roger Wolcott Minard

They called it Yellow Jack, this dreaded yellow fever of the tropics which killed so many people every year. Central and South America and the West Indies had been the home of yellow fever for thousands of years. There was no cure, because nobody knew what caused the disease.

Yellow Jack was no respecter of persons. It killed all men alike, the Yankee sailors, the natives, the traders, and the Spanish priests. Yellow Jack crept upon them stealthily, like the murderer he was. In the evening the victim would be well and strong,—he'd eat a good supper and go comfortably to bed. When he awoke his face would be hot, dry and flushed, his eyes staring,—his brain on fire. And, as happened to more than half of those who were attacked, by the third day he would be dead.

We don't hear much about yellow fever nowadays. Most people, if asked, would say that yellow fever was wiped out by our American surgeon, General Gorgas, working in Havana during the Spanish War, and in the Canal Zone during the construction of the Panama Canal.

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General Gorgas and his men drained the swamps, cleaned up the flatlands, disposed of garbage and sewage, and protected men from mosquitoes, but they were only applying the laws previously discovered by a poor doctor, almost unknown to the world.

This man, Dr. Carlos Juan Finlay, was a Cuban. He was born in Cuba, but attended medical schools in France and in the United States. Back in Havana, a full-fledged doctor, he hung out his shingle and began his practice.

All around him in Havana he saw his friends and neighbors dying of yellow fever. Every year the same, and every death a mystery to the medical profession. They came to him, these friends of his, eyes wild with fear and voices shrill with pain,—and he could do nothing for them except to send them home to die. The determination to find the cause, and after that the cure of yellow fever became Doctor Finlay's reason for living. He devoted more and more of his time to this purpose. Gradually his practice dropped off. His patients lost faith in him. He had such foolish ideas!

He slept in a filthy shack, with garbage on the floor and mosquito netting at the windows, and proved to himself that yellow fever does not come from filth. He caught mosquitoes, kept them in glass jars and test tubes, and let them bite small animals. Some of the animals died of yellow fever, and yet nothing had been proved. The yellow fever might have been in their blood, their food, or the air they breathed! Dr. Finlay was a failure,—he had not enough knowledge, not the right equipment, and not

enough money to go on with his work and prove the truth of his theory that mosquitoes carry yellow fever.

When the United States went to the aid of Cuba in her struggle for independence from Spain, American soldiers were exposed to the peril of yellow fever. Many of them died, and the American army doctors were just as helpless in the face of this disease as other doctors of the tropics had always been. They were helpless,—until a poor old man, considered foolish by all who knew of him and his work, went to General Gorgas and talked to him. Yes, it was Doctor Finlay. So great was his faith in his theory that he was willing to give his life's work away rather than have it wasted; he desired to serve men more than he desired to receive credit for his work!

With their superior knowledge, equipment and resources the American doctors had a better chance to succeed. They tested case after case and finally found the theory to be correct. Thus began the long, unending war on mosquitoes which has conquered yellow jack. In the city of Havana alone, in the month of November, 1900, there were 214 cases of yellow fever, with 54 deaths. One year later, in the same month, not a single person had yellow fever, and there had not been a death from yellow fever in several months!

In order to honor Dr. Carlos Juan Finlay and his magnificent life-saving work, the government of Cuba has issued a stamp bearing his portrait. Many collectors desire this stamp because of the heroic life of the man it honors.



by C. A. Howes

Southeast of Asia the Malay Peninsula and numerous islands near the mainland extend far out into the tropical seas. Here is the home of the little known Malay race. The Federation of Malay States governs under the protection of the British Empire. Some sections of the states are highly civilized. Others, however, have never been reclaimed from the jungle, and from the wild life of the jungle.

The villages are set up in scattered clearings. Here and there open fields are half-heartedly worked for the grain from which the natives make their bread. There is a hot season and a rainy season, during which the jungles alternately bake and steam, and the natives alternately sleep and eat and loaf. Nature is generous in the tropics. Man does not need to work very hard to earn his living.

However, there are a few unpleasant things about this lazy life in the tropics. In order to have milk, eggs and meat the natives must raise domestic animals, such as goats, cows, pigs and chickens. The wild animals of the jungle are fond of such animals. They have found that a tame animal's flesh is tender and sweet, and tame animals

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are easy to catch. Tame animals do not have the running muscles which are developed by the wild animals which have to run for their food, and also to avoid being eaten.

The tigers of the jungle raid the enclosures where the domestic animals are kept. They cause great losses of stock, and even worse, when they are hungry enough they turn on man and kill him. A straying child, a woman working in the grain patch,—or a man who is unaware of his danger. When the tiger becomes a man-killer the villagers rise and unite in an unrelenting hunt,—searching out and destroying the killer. This is a dangerous task, for in these hot regions the tiger's fur is short, smooth, and brightly colored. The black and yellow stripes are one of nature's best examples of protective coloring. The tiger concealed in the reeds and grass of the jungle is indistinguishable until he moves, and often that is too late for the unwary hunter.

Because the tiger is found only in Asia and the Malay area, and because the finest of all tigers are found in the Malay States, the States Government has issued "tiger" stamps. The stamps picture the tiger emerging from the jungle.

Perhaps the picture is a symbol of the Malay States whose meaning is something like this: "Our people are strong; our people are beautiful in their strength. Some day we will emerge into the world of civilization, and take our rightful place among the nations."



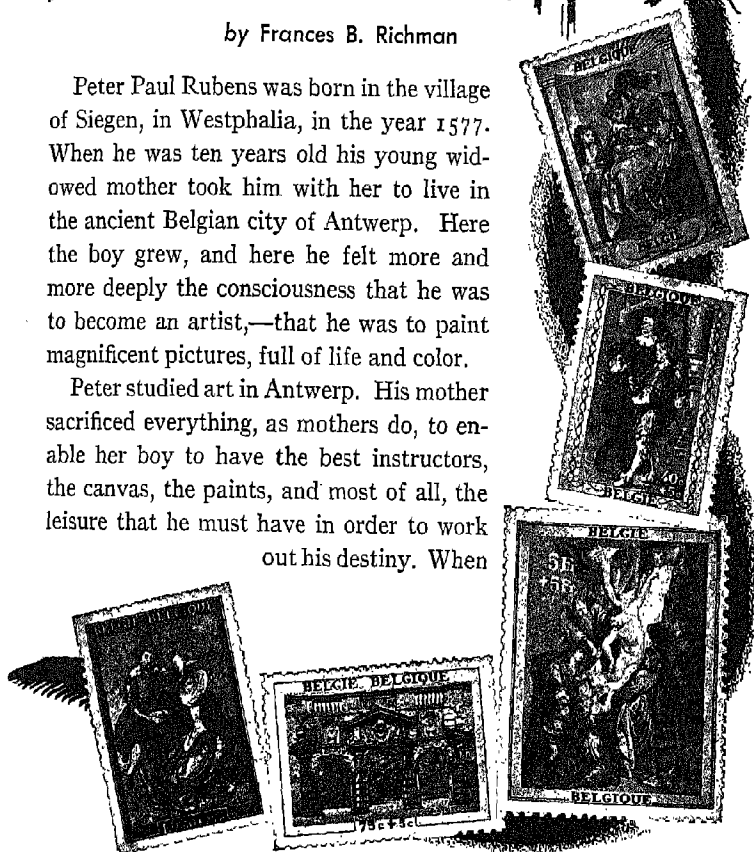
*The Story  
behind the Stamp*

PETER PAUL RUBENS

by Frances B. Richman

Peter Paul Rubens was born in the village of Siegen, in Westphalia, in the year 1577. When he was ten years old his young widowed mother took him with her to live in the ancient Belgian city of Antwerp. Here the boy grew, and here he felt more and more deeply the consciousness that he was to become an artist,—that he was to paint magnificent pictures, full of life and color.

Peter studied art in Antwerp. His mother sacrificed everything, as mothers do, to enable her boy to have the best instructors, the canvas, the paints, and most of all, the leisure that he must have in order to work out his destiny. When



he was a little older Peter Paul Rubens went alone to Italy, to live in the house of the Duke of Mantua, a wealthy Italian nobleman who was interested in art. From this time on Rubens knew no more of poverty. His life was spent in the castles and the courts, where the people of fashion and luxury gathered.

When he was thirty-two years old Rubens returned to Antwerp. Three years afterward he painted what most people consider his masterpiece, "The Descent of Christ from the Cross." Rubens painted twenty-four huge panels which hang in the Louvre, the world's greatest museum of art. In his later life Rubens went to Spain on another diplomatic mission, and also to the court of England. In England Rubens was a great favorite of the King, Charles I, for whom he painted many portraits.

In spite of his lengthy visits to the courts of foreign rulers, Rubens' home was in Antwerp. The house where he lived is still standing. In 1939, on the three hundredth anniversary of Rubens' death, the country of Belgium issued a series of stamps on each of which an extra charge, or surcharge, is imposed. The Belgian people gladly pay this extra charge, for the money so raised is to be used to restore the house. It will become a national museum belonging to the Belgian people. Perhaps some day many of Rubens' paintings will be gathered together and housed in the artist's own home.

The new Belgian stamps consist of a series of eight, all but the first two of which bear reproductions of paintings by Rubens. The house where Rubens lived and the gate



nearby are portrayed, probably from photographs. The other six stamps bear portraits which the artist painted of his family and himself, and his great religious painting, which is one of the world's finest works of art.

Rubens married twice. The fourth stamp shows the artist seated on the arm of a chair in which his first wife is sitting, lovely and demure. This first wife died when she was still a young woman. The fifth stamp shows Rubens' second wife with her two children. She also is very sweet and beautiful in the plump, wholesome way which was the fashion in those days. The next stamp shows a lady wearing a large feather-trimmed hat. The lady is one of Rubens' wives. Can you tell which one?

Rubens' portrait of his sons appears on the seventh stamp. The lads look very boyish in their quaint ruffled costumes and their stiff, fashionable poses.

Rubens' picture of himself completes the series. It shows us the head and shoulders of a strong, sensitive man with an alert, watchful expression. How well the artist caught the look on his face as he gazed in the mirror and painted his own reflection!

It is easy to understand why kings and nobles wished to have their portraits done by Rubens. His paintings emphasize the rich colors and luxurious textures of the elaborate clothes which were the fashion of his day.

Collectors who are interested in stamps which commemorate great achievements in the world of art and religion value the Rubens memorial stamps for their beauty as well as for their historical importance.



### WHO SAYS CAN'T? \*

He was told he couldn't,  
but—well, anyway, he got  
the biggest piece of cake.

by Kathryn McClure

#### CHARACTERS

MRS. WRIGHT	EDITH WRIGHT
MR. WRIGHT	ISABEL, <i>Edith's chum</i>
ROBERT WRIGHT	TOMMY, <i>Robert's pal</i>

SCENE: *The dining room of the Wrights.*

TIME: *The noon hour on Saturday.*

*The Wright's dining room is typical of the average American family. Books, papers, magazines, etc., are scattered in disorder on the chairs and on the floor. Up-*

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per left is a door which leads into the front yard. Lower right is a window, and upper right, a door into the kitchen. It is the luncheon hour on Saturday.

When the curtain rises, Mr. Wright, at the head of the table, is glancing over the paper. Robert and Edith are quarreling in brotherly and sisterly fashion, and Mrs. Wright is attempting to quiet the children so that poor, tired Father can rest.

EDITH. (*Reaching for the last slice of bread.*) That's mine!

ROBERT. (*Also reaching.*) I got it first.

MRS. WRIGHT. Children, children!

MR. WRIGHT. (*Over his paper.*) More tea, Mother?

MRS. WRIGHT. Edith, dear, run and get some tea for Father. (*Edith rises ungraciously and stamps out of the room. In a minute she comes back with a granite teapot, which she slams down in front of her mother.*) Do you think there's room on the table for the teapot, dear?

EDITH. Well, I get tired of jumping up and running out to the kitchen all the time.

MR. WRIGHT. (*Suddenly regaining consciousness.*) Edith, do as your mother says.

EDITH. All right! (*She pours her father's tea and starts for the door.*)

ROBERT. Give me some tea, Sis, will you? Say, why don't you ever strain the tea?

EDITH. I don't like my tea strained. I want to see how many men I can get in my cup.

ROBERT. That's the only place you'll ever get any.

EDITH. Well, we'll see about that! (*With a disdainful toss of her head, she takes the teapot to the kitchen, returning immediately.*)

MR. WRIGHT. (*Glancing at his watch.*) We'd better be going or we'll be late. I'll go out and get the car started. (*He leaves.*)

MRS. WRIGHT. Edith, remember you're to clear off the table, and clean up the kitchen before you go anywhere.

EDITH. Robert's got to help me.

ROBERT. Aw, I— (*A brilliant thought strikes him.*) I've got a committee meeting.

MRS. WRIGHT. Edith, you must remember that Robert is a junior in high school. When you're a junior, dear, then . . . (*A horn is heard honking violently. She calls from the window.*) I'll be out as soon as I get my hat. (*She picks up her hat from one chair and her purse from another. In the meantime, Edith has helped herself to the biggest piece of cake.*)

ROBERT. Say, Sis, ever heard of the Limited Mail?

EDITH. No, I haven't. Why?

ROBERT. Well, you're the unlimited female!

MRS. WRIGHT. (*Shocked.*) Why, Robert!

ROBERT. Aw, Edith always takes the biggest piece, Mom. (*Mrs. Wright would like to settle the quarrel, but the horn honks again stridently. With a despairing gesture she rushes out.*)

EDITH. (*With her best society manner.*) It was the piece nearest me.

ROBERT. Yeh? After you'd turned the plate around.

EDITH. Well, I notice the biggest piece is always gone, if you get first chance at the plate.

ROBERT. Aw, that's different. Girls are supposed to be dainty.

EDITH. I'd like to know why.

ROBERT. (*Playing his trump card.*) Well, you won't ever get a beau, if you're always grabbing the biggest slice for yourself.

EDITH. That's all you think women are good for. To hand the biggest share of everything to men. Mom's always saving the biggest piece for Dad. Well, believe me, I'm never going to do it when I get a husband.

ROBERT. Don't worry. You won't get one.

EDITH. I don't want one.

ROBERT. Naw! (*He mimics Edith.*) "Marian, why don't the boys like me? Do you know, I'm sixteen, and none of them's ever kissed me?"

EDITH. Robert Jonathan Wright, if anybody had told me my own brother was an eavesdropper, I wouldn't have believed——

ROBERT. Aw, I'll have to be going.

EDITH. (*As a parting shaft.*) Well, Mr. Wright, I guess I could be kissed if I wanted to.

ROBERT. (*Sarcastically.*) Sure you could!

EDITH. I could, too!

ROBERT. Well, I said you could, didn't I?

EDITH. (*Stung to desperation.*) I'll bet you my birthday money I could.

ROBERT. (*Contemplation.*) Ten bucks! Gee, that's

just what Tommy and I need to pay off what we owe on the boat. To show you I'm a regular fellow, I'll let you set the time limit.

EDITH. (*Defiantly.*) Tonight!

ROBERT. (*Thunderstruck.*) Tonight!

EDITH. Yes, tonight, Mr. Smarty. (*There is a whistle outside. Robert gives an answering whistle and begins to search frantically for his coat.*)

ROBERT. Say, where's my coat?

EDITH. How should I know? Why don't you look in the ice box? (*Robert discovers his coat behind the chair and dashes off. Edith angrily gathers up a pile of dishes and takes them into the kitchen. Isabel, a daintily ruffled maiden carrying a basket of flowers, enters.*)

ISABEL. (*Glancing around the room.*) Edith! (*Edith enters hurriedly.*)

EDITH. Oh, hello, Isabel!

ISABEL. Mother sent over these flowers. Shall I put them on the table?

EDITH. (*Preoccupied.*) Yes. (*She continues to clear the table. In her attempt to hurry, she drops several pieces of silverware.*)

ISABEL. Why, Edith!

EDITH. Well, it's enough to make anybody swear!

ISABEL. What is?

EDITH. Having a brother.

ISABEL. Oh, I think it would be fun to have a brother!

EDITH. Anybody'd know you never had one.

ISABEL. Robert is a dear. I don't think you appreciate

him, Edith. Why, you could wrap Robert around your little finger, if you tried.

EDITH. I'd like to rap him on the head. I don't wish you any bad luck, but I hope you get him!

ISABEL. May I help you?

EDITH. (*Graciously.*) No, thank you. You might get your dress dirty, and besides it will only take me a minute. (*She finishes clearing the table, then comes over and sits down by Isabel. Beseechingly.*) Isabel, could you make a boy kiss you if he didn't want to?

ISABEL. (*From the depths of her eighteen years' experience.*) Any woman can make any man do anything she wants him to.

EDITH. Oh. Can she really, Isabel? But how?

ISABEL. Why this sudden interest in men, Edith?

EDITH. Well, you see, I made a bet with Robert to give him my ten dollars if I didn't get kissed before tonight.

ISABEL. Tonight! Why, Edith!

EDITH. Oh, I know it's impossible. I was mad, and didn't care. (*Beginning to cry.*) And, now I'll lose my birthday money, and Robert will poke fun at me, and——

ISABEL. There, don't cry. Listen to me, Edith. You can do it, if you only think you can. Have confidence in yourself; that's the secret.

EDITH. (*Drying her eyes.*) Ye-e-s?

ISABEL. It's really very simple. All you have to do is to work out some kind of plan.

EDITH. (*Dubiously.*) A plan?

ISABEL. Yes. (*She explains impressively.*) If I met a



boy and we walked down to the library, that would not be a plan. But if we came home and sat on the porch, *that* would be a plan, don't you see?

EDITH. Oh, you mean, plan out the whole thing and follow it through.

ISABEL. Yes. And, then, you want to make him, whoever he is, talk about himself.

EDITH. But men do that naturally.

ISABEL. And you must be awfully interested in what he tells you, and pretend you think he's wonderful.

EDITH. Yes, go on.

ISABEL. If he's young, tell him he's awfully mature for his age; and if he's old, tell him he looks so young.

EDITH. But I don't want an old one.

ISABEL. Well, it's just as well to know how to handle them all.

EDITH. But how am I going to make him kiss me?

ISABEL. Make him think that if he tried to kiss you, you might let him.

EDITH. But how?

ISABEL. Oh, that'll just come to you. And when he starts to kiss you, struggle just a little bit,—not too much, or he may think you mean it.

EDITH. Why struggle at all?



ISABEL. (*Vaguely.*) Well, they like it. It sorta makes 'em feel— (*Triumphantly.*) —as if we couldn't resist them.

EDITH. Do you remember your first proposal, Isabel?

ISABEL. (*Dreamily.*) Uh-huh. I was sitting on our front porch sewing. I had on my pink French gingham, and my new black pumps, and I was wearing the bracelet Dad had given me for my birthday. I sat with a far-away look in my eyes. (*She demonstrates by gazing through the window.*) Oh, here comes Tommy! You can practise on him.

EDITH. Oh, no! I couldn't, Isabel.

ISABEL. It means ten dollars to you. Go upstairs and change your dress while I fix the room.

EDITH. You mean you'll make a situation here?

ISABEL. Yes. Hurry, Edith! (*Edith rushes out. Isabel moves the table, rearranges the chairs, throws books, rackets, cloaks, caps, etc., indiscriminately into the kitchen. She tosses a few pillows on the floor and stands back to survey her handiwork. Edith comes in wearing a pink dress, black pumps and a bracelet, and holding a darning needle and a stocking in her hand.*)

EDITH. Is the bracelet all right? It's Mother's.

ISABEL. Yes, the bracelet's fine. But what on earth are you doing with that stocking?

EDITH. Well, you said you were sewing.

ISABEL. Yes, I know,—but haven't you something a little more dainty?

EDITH. No. Mother doesn't do fancy-work any more since her eyes went back on her.

ISABEL. Well, I guess it will have to do. It does look sort of domestic. Here, sit down in this chair. (*Edith drops awkwardly into the chair.*) No! Don't sit that way. (*Isabel tries to arrange Edith in a graceful position, but the attempt is unsuccessful. In despair she pulls Edith out of the chair.*) Here, I'll show you. See. Like this. (*Isabel takes a carelessly graceful position, her right arm behind her head, and her left resting loosely on the back of the chair, the fingers pointing heavenward. She rises, and Edith achieves a fair imitation of the lovely Isabel, holding the stocking aloft in her left hand as if it were some triumphant banner.*) O-oh, there's Tommy coming up the back walk now! I'll slip out the front way!

EDITH. (*In a panic.*) You aren't going, Isabel?

ISABEL. You little goose, if I stayed I'd spoil the situation! Now remember, you can make any man do anything you want him to. (*She goes through the front door, just as Tommy enters through the kitchen.*)

EDITH. (*Nervously.*) Oh, hello, Tommy.

TOMMY. Hello. Say, where's Bob?

EDITH. He said he had to go to a committee meeting.

TOMMY. Committee meeting! That's funny. I didn't hear anything about any meeting. Guess I'd better be going.

EDITH. (*Coaxingly.*) Don't go yet, Tommy. I want to ask you something.

TOMMY. Make it snappy.

EDITH. (*Moving her chair nearer him.*) What are you going to do, Tommy, when you finish high school?

TOMMY. Work for a living. Well, so long.

EDITH. (*Moving her chair still closer to Tommy.*) That's a wonderful ambition. You're awfully old for your age, aren't you?

TOMMY. Wh-a-at? (*He looks at Edith closely for the first time.*) Well, look at this! Darnin' socks and everything! Net all spread for the sucker! '

EDITH. Well, is it wrong to darn socks? (*Tommy gets on the floor looking for something.*) Did you lose something, Tommy?

TOMMY. (*Tragically.*) Yes!

EDITH. Maybe I can help you find it. What was it?

TOMMY. (*Sarcastically.*) My heart! (*With a swift, angry movement, Edith pushes Tommy over backward. Tommy, at once the angry male, scrambles off the floor.*) I've a good notion to choke you for that. (*Tommy rushes over to the startled Edith, and begins to choke her. Robert appears in the door, and jumps to the conclusion that Tommy is embracing Edith.*)

ROBERT. Tommy, don't you kiss Edith.

TOMMY. (*Astounded.*) Don't *what*?

ROBERT. Listen to me, Tom. You can't kiss Edith. I'm your pal, ain't I? I tell you, you can't. Why, if you do——

TOMMY. (*Who had no intention of kissing Edith.*) Oh, I can't, can't I?

ROBERT. No, Tom, you can't. I tell you——

TOMMY. Well, who says can't? I'll show you whether I can or not. (*Kisses Edith awkwardly under the left eyebrow, and turns and faces Robert defiantly. Edith is thrilled. She has received her first kiss, and she has saved her ten dollars.*)

ROBERT. A swell friend you are! If you'd 'a'listened to me, we'd have had ten dollars to pay for our boat.

TOMMY. Ten dollars! (*With a look of utter disgust for the friend who had failed him in his hour of need, Robert, viciously kicking his hat out of the way, bangs the door behind him.*)

EDITH. (*Pursuing Tommy, who is dazedly following Robert.*) Tommy, there's a cake in the kitchen, and I'm going to get it for you.

TOMMY. (*Becoming conscious.*) Did you say cake?

EDITH. Yes. (*She dashes out and comes in with a cake, which she sets in front of Tommy. She watches him adoringly as he reaches for a piece.*) Oh, take this piece, Tommy. It's the biggest piece!

CURTAIN

## THE ROOF \*

by Gelett Burgess

The roof it has an easy time,  
A-lying in the sun;  
The walls they have to hold it up;  
They do not have much fun.

\*From the *Burgess Nonsense Book*, Horace B. Liveright, publisher. Used by permission of the author.

## WHAT TO DO?

### A Self-Test

A boy is walking with two girls. Which is his proper position?



1. Behind the girls.
2. On the curb-side.
3. Between the girls.

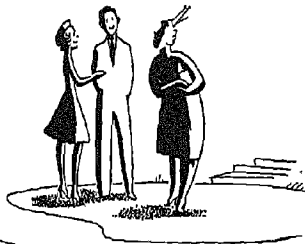
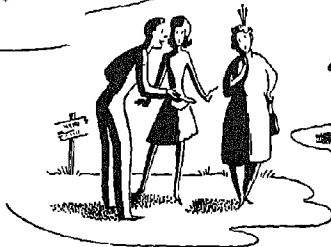
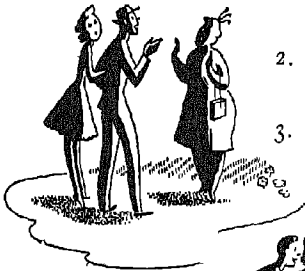


A boy and a girl meet a lady whom the girl knows, but the boy doesn't. What does the boy do or say?

1. The boy says, "Now there's what I call a hat!"



2. The boy tips his hat and says, "Hiyah!"
3. The boy smiles and speaks.





## WHO SPEAKS FIRST?

### *A Self-Test*

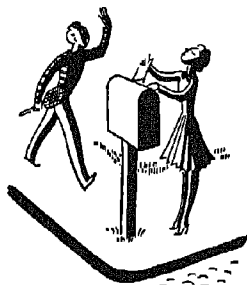
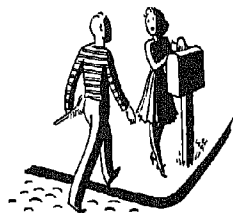
The boy and the girl meet a lady the boy knows, but the girl doesn't. The boy speaks to the lady. What does the girl do?



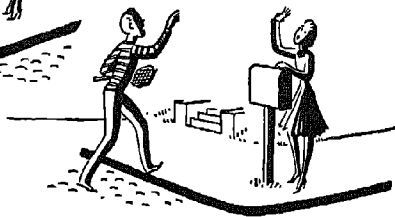
1. The girl speaks too.
2. The girl says, "Who's that?"
3. The girl smiles, but does not speak.



The boy and the girl meet on the corner. Who speaks first, or do they both speak together?



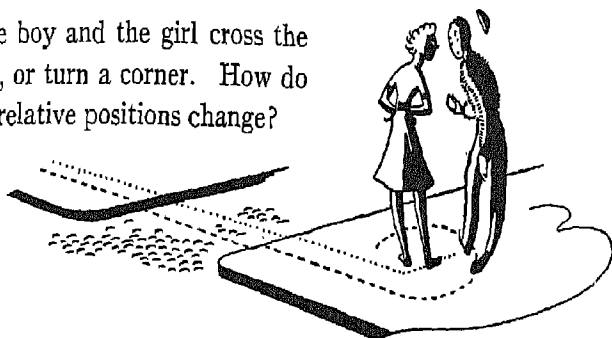
1. The girl speaks first.
2. The boy speaks first.
3. Neither one speaks until the other one does.



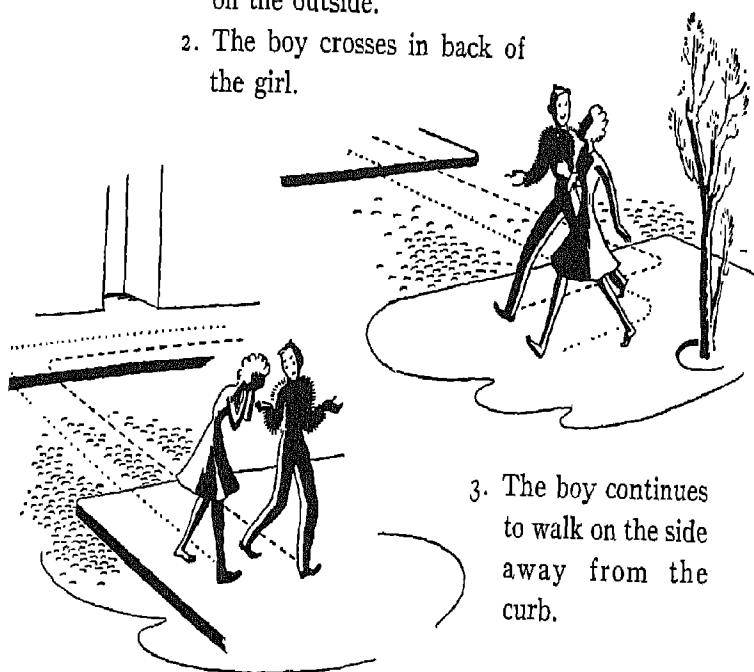
## WALKING TOGETHER

### *A Self-Test*

The boy and the girl cross the street, or turn a corner. How do their relative positions change?



1. The boy hurries around in front of the girl to get back on the outside.
2. The boy crosses in back of the girl.



3. The boy continues to walk on the side away from the curb.

## ARE YOU LAZY?

### A Self-Test

Are you lazy? You can easily determine this by answering the following questions truthfully.

1. Do you deliberately plan ways of "getting out of" work at home?

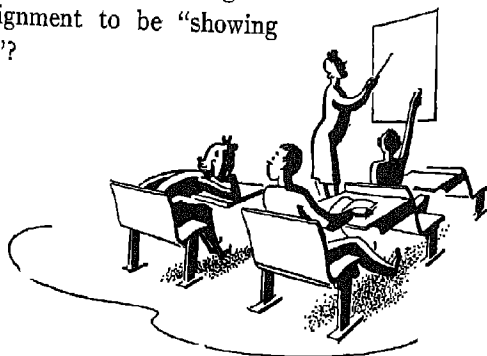
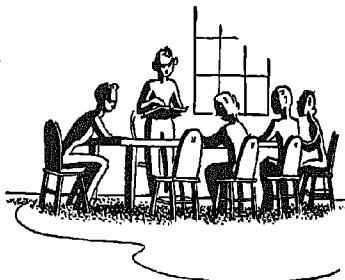
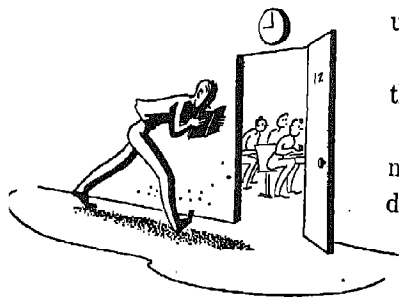
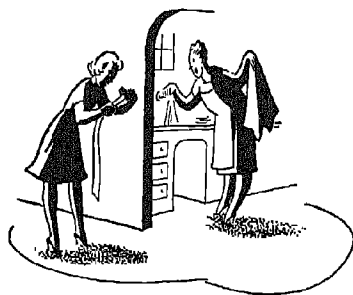
2. Do you put off your work until the last possible moment?

3. Do you hate to get up in the morning?

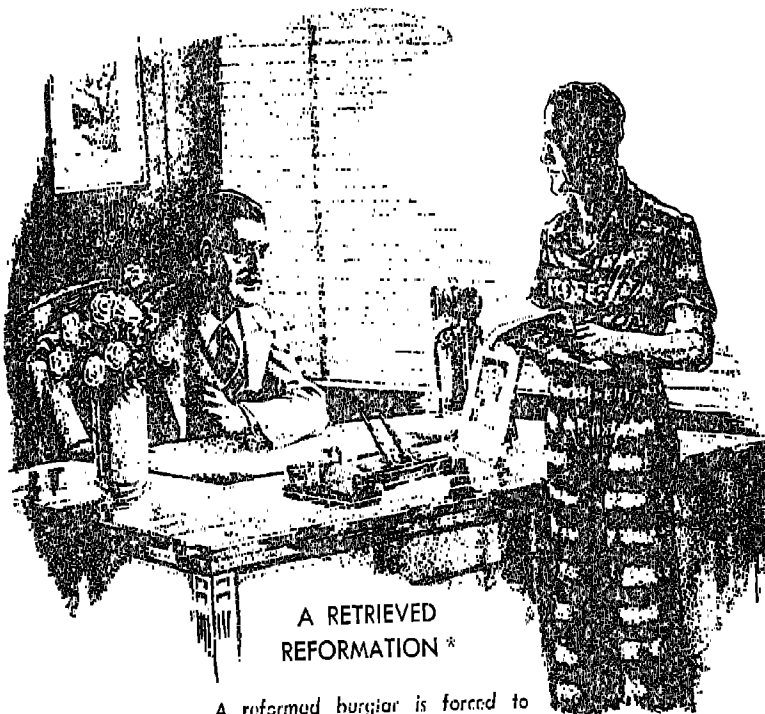
4. Do you offer to help your mother without being asked to do something for her?

5. Do you drop out of teams, committees, clubs, and other groups because they are "too much trouble"?

6. Do you consider the students who are doing extra work more than the regular assignment to be "showing off"?







### A RETRIEVED REFORMATION \*

*A reformed burglar is forced to  
"crack" a bank safe,—with his  
sweetheart and a G-man looking on!*

by O. Henry

A guard came to the prison shoe-shop, where Jimmy Valentine was carefully stitching uppers, and escorted him to the front office. There the warden handed Jimmy his pardon, which had been signed that morning by the governor. Jimmy took it in a tired kind of way. He had served nearly ten months of a four-year sentence. He had expected to stay only about three months, at the longest. When a man with as many friends on the outside as Jimmy

\* From *Roads of Destiny* by O. Henry, copyright, 1903, 1931, by Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc.

Valentine had is received in the "stir" it is hardly worth while to cut his hair.

"Now, Valentine," said the warden, "you'll go out in the morning. Brace up, and make a man of yourself. You're not a bad fellow at heart. Stop cracking safes, and live straight."

"Me?" said Jimmy, in surprise. "Why, I never cracked a safe in my life."

"Oh, no," laughed the warden. "Of course not. Let's see, now. How was it you happened to get sent up on that Springfield job? Was it because you wouldn't prove an alibi for fear of compromising somebody in extremely high-toned society? Or was it simply a case of a mean old jury that had it in for you? It's always one or the other with you innocent victims."

"Me?" said Jimmy, still blankly virtuous. "Why, warden, I never was in Springfield in my life!"

"Take him back, Cronin," smiled the warden, "and fix him up with outgoing clothes. Unlock him at seven in the morning, and let him come to the bull-pen. Better think over my advice, Valentine."

At a quarter past seven on the next morning Jimmy stood in the warden's outer office. He had on a suit of the villainously fitting, ready-made clothes and a pair of the stiff, squeaky shoes that the state furnishes to its discharged compulsory guests.

The clerk handed him a railroad ticket and the five-dollar bill with which the law expected him to rehabilitate himself into good citizenship and prosperity. The warden gave him a cigar, and shook hands. Valentine, 9762, was

chronicled on the books "Pardoned by Governor," and Mr. James Valentine walked out free into the sunshine.

Disregarding the song of the birds, the waving green trees, and the smell of the flowers, Jimmy headed straight for a restaurant. There he tasted the first sweet joys of liberty in the shape of a broiled chicken—followed by a cigar a grade better than the one the warden had given him. From there he proceeded leisurely to the depot. He tossed a quarter into the hat of a blind man sitting by the door, and boarded his train. Three hours set him down in a little town near the state line. He went to the café of one Mike Dolan and shook hands with Mike, who was alone behind the bar.

"Sorry we couldn't make it sooner, Jimmy, me boy," said Mike. "But we had that protest from Springfield to buck against, and the governor nearly balked."

"Fine," said Jimmy. "Got my key?"

He got his key and went upstairs, unlocking the door of a room at the rear. Everything was just as he had left it. There on the floor was still Ben Price's collar-button that had been torn from that eminent detective's shirt-band when they had overpowered Jimmy to arrest him.

Pulling out from the wall a folding-bed, Jimmy slid back a panel in the wall and dragged out a dust-covered suitcase. He opened this and gazed fondly at the finest set of burglar's tools in the East. It was a complete set, made of specially tempered steel, the latest designs in drills, punches, braces and bits, jimmies, clamps, and augers, with two or three novelties invented by Jimmy himself, in which he took pride. Over nine hundred dollars they

had cost him to have made at —, a place where they make such things for the profession.

In half an hour Jimmy went downstairs and through the café. He was now dressed in tasteful and well-fitting clothes, and carried his dusted suitcase in his hand.

"Got anything on?" asked Mike Dolan, genially.

"Me?" said Jimmy, in a puzzled tone. "I don't understand. I'm representing the New York Amalgamated Short Snap Biscuit Cracker and Wheat Company."

This statement delighted Mike to such an extent that Jimmy had to take a seltzer-and-milk on the spot. He never touched "hard" drinks.

A week after the release of Valentine, 9762, there was a neat job of safe-burglary done in Richmond, Indiana, with no clue to the author. A scant eight hundred dollars was all that was secured. Two weeks after that a patented, improved, burglar-proof safe in Logansport was opened like a cheese to the tune of fifteen hundred dollars, currency; securities and silver untouched. That began to interest the rogue-catchers. Then an old-fashioned bank-safe in Jefferson City became active and threw out of its crater an eruption of bank-notes amounting to five thousand dollars. The losses were now high enough to bring the matter up into Ben Price's class of work. By comparing notes, a remarkable similarity in the methods of the burglaries was noticed. Ben Price investigated the scenes of the robberies, and was heard to remark:

"That's Dandy Jim Valentine's autograph. He's resumed business. Look at that combination knob—jerked

out as easy as pulling up a radish in wet weather. He's got the only clamps that can do it. And look how clean those tumblers were punched out! Jimmy never has to drill but one hole. Yes, I guess I want Mr. Valentine. He'll do his bit next time without any short-time or clemency foolishness."

Ben Price knew Jimmy's habits. He had learned them while working up the Springfield case. Long jumps, quick get-aways, no confederates, and a taste for good society—these ways had helped Mr. Valentine to become noted as a successful dodger. It was given out that Ben Price had taken up the trail of the elusive cracksman, and other people with burglar-proof safes felt more at ease.

One afternoon Jimmy Valentine and his suitcase climbed out of the mail-hack in Elmore, a little town five miles off the railroad down in the black-jack country of Arkansas. Jimmy, looking like an athletic young senior just home from college, went down the board sidewalk toward the hotel.

A young lady crossed the street, passed him at the corner and entered a door over which was the sign "The Elmore Bank." Jimmy Valentine looked into her eyes, forgot what he was, and became another man. She lowered her eyes and colored slightly. Young men of Jimmy's style and looks were scarce in Elmore.

Jimmy collared a boy that was loafing on the steps of the bank as if he were one of the stock-holders, and began to ask him questions about the town, feeding him dimes at intervals. By and by the young lady came out, looking

royally unconscious of the young man with the suitcase, and went her way.

"Isn't that young lady Miss Polly Simpson?" asked Jimmy, with specious guile.

"Naw," said the boy. "She's Annabel Adams. Her pa owns this bank. What'd you come to Elmore for? Is that a gold watch-chain? I'm going to get a bulldog. Got any more dimes?"

Jimmy went to the Planters' Hotel, registered as Ralph D. Spencer, and engaged a room. He leaned on the desk and declared his platform to the clerk. He said he had come to Elmore to look for a location to go into business. How was the shoe business, now, in the town? He had thought of the shoe business. Was there an opening?

The clerk was impressed by the clothes and manner of Jimmy. He, himself, was something of a pattern of fashion to the thinly gilded youth of Elmore, but he now perceived his shortcomings. While trying to figure out Jimmy's manner of tying his four-in-hand he cordially gave information.

Yes, there ought to be a good opening in the shoe line. There wasn't an exclusive shoe-store in the place. The dry-goods and general stores handled them. Business in all lines was fairly good. Hoped Mr. Spencer would decide to locate in Elmore. He would find it a pleasant town to live in, and the people very sociable.

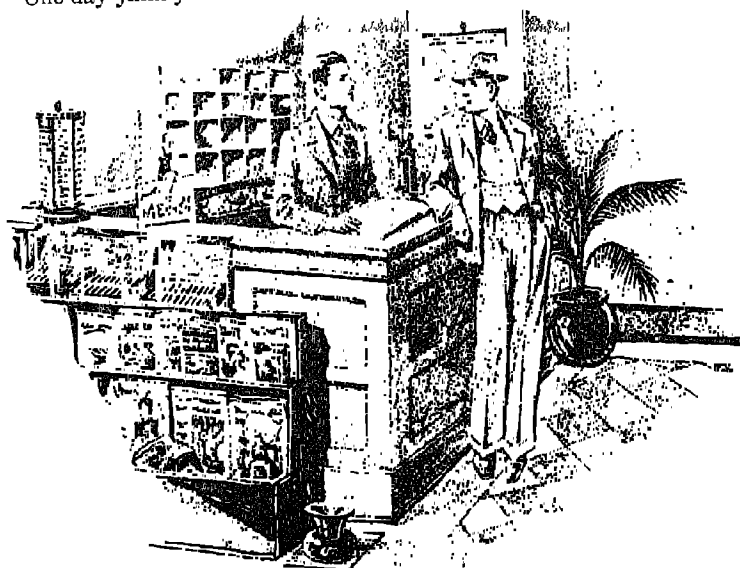
Mr. Spencer thought he would stop over in the town a few days and look over the situation. No, the clerk needn't call the boy. He would carry up his suitcase, himself; it was rather heavy.

Mr. Ralph Spencer, the phoenix that arose from Jimmy Valentine's ashes—ashes left by the flame of a sudden and alternative attack of love—remained in Elmore, and prospered. He opened a shoe-store and secured a good run of trade.

Socially he was also a success, and made many friends. And he accomplished the wish of his heart. He met Miss Annabel Adams, and became more and more captivated by her charms.

At the end of a year the situation of Mr. Ralph Spencer was this: he had won the respect of the community, his shoe-store was flourishing, and he and Annabel were engaged to be married in two weeks. Mr. Adams, the typical, plodding, country banker, approved of Spencer. Annabel's pride in him almost equalled her affection. He was as much at home in the family of Mr. Adams and that of Annabel's married sister as if he were already a member.

One day Jimmy sat down in his room and wrote this let-



ter, which he mailed to the safe address of one of his old friends in St. Louis:

Dear old Pal:

I want you to be at Sullivan's place, in Little Rock next Wednesday night, at nine o'clock. I want you to wind up some little matters for me. And, also, I want to make you a present of my kit of tools. I know you'll be glad to get them—you couldn't duplicate the lot for a thousand dollars. Say, Billy, I've quit the old business—a year ago. I've got a nice store. I'm making an honest living, and I'm going to marry the finest girl on earth two weeks from now. It's the only life, Billy—the straight one. I wouldn't touch a dollar of another man's money now for a million. After I get married I'm going to sell out and go West, where there won't be much danger of having old scores brought up against me. I tell you, Billy, she's an angel. She believes in me; and I wouldn't do another crooked thing for the whole world. Be sure to be at Sully's, for I must see you. I'll bring along the tools with me.

Your old friend,  
Jimmy.

On the Monday night after Jimmy wrote this letter, Ben Price jogged unobtrusively into Elmore in a livery buggy. He lounged about town in his quiet way until he found out what he wanted to know. From the drug-store across the street from Spencer's shoe-store he got a good look at Ralph D. Spencer.



"Going to marry the banker's daughter are you, Jimmy?" said Ben to himself, softly. "Well, I don't know!"

The next morning Jimmy took breakfast at the Adamses. He was going to Little Rock that day to order his wedding-suit and buy something nice for Annabel. That would be the first time he had left town since he came to Elmore. It had been more than a year now since those last professional "jobs," and he thought he could safely venture out.

After breakfast quite a family party went down town together—Mr. Adams, Annabel, Jimmy, and Annabel's married sister with her two little girls, aged five and nine. They came by the hotel where Jimmy still boarded, and he ran up to his room and brought along his suitcase. Then they went on to the bank. There stood Jimmy's horse and buggy and Dolph Gibson, who was going to drive him over to the railroad station.

All went inside the high, carved oak railings into the banking-room—Jimmy included, for Mr. Adams's future son-in-law was welcome anywhere. The clerks were pleased to be greeted by the good-looking, agreeable young man who was going to marry Miss Annabel. Jimmy set his suitcase down. Annabel, whose heart was bubbling with happiness and lively youth, put on Jimmy's hat and picked up the suitcase. "Wouldn't I make a nice drummer?" said Annabel. "My! Ralph, how heavy it is. Feels like it was full of gold bricks."

"Lot of nickel-plated shoe-horns in there," said Jimmy.

coolly, "that I'm going to return. Thought I'd save express charges by taking them up. I'm getting awfully economical."

The Elmore Bank had just put in a new safe and vault. Mr. Adams was very proud of it, and insisted on an inspection by every one. The vault was a small one, but it had a new patented door. It fastened with three solid steel bolts thrown simultaneously with a single handle, and had a time-lock. Mr. Adams beamingly explained its workings to Mr. Spencer, who showed a courteous but not too intelligent interest. The two children, May and Agatha, were delighted by the shining metal and funny clock and knobs.

While they were thus engaged Ben Price sauntered in and leaned on his elbow, looking casually inside between the railings. He told the teller that he didn't want anything; he was just waiting for a man he knew.

Suddenly there was a scream or two from the women, and a commotion. Unperceived by the elders, May, the nine-year-old girl, in a spirit of play, had shut Agatha in the vault. She had then shot the bolts and turned the knob of the combination as she had seen Mr. Adams do.

The old banker sprang to the handle and tugged at it for a moment. "The door can't be opened," he groaned. "The clock hasn't been wound nor the combination set."

Agatha's mother screamed again, hysterically.

"Hush!" said Mr. Adams, raising his trembling hand. "All be quiet for a moment. Agatha!" he called as loudly as he could. "Listen to me." During the following

silence they could just hear the faint sound of the child wildly shrieking in the dark vault in a panic of terror.

"My precious darling!" wailed the mother. "She will die of fright! Open the door! Oh, break it open! Can't you men do something?"

"There isn't a man nearer than Little Rock who can open that door," said Mr. Adams, in a shaky voice. "My God! Spencer, what shall we do? That child—she can't stand it long in there. There isn't enough air, and, besides, she'll go into convulsions from fright."

Agatha's mother, frantic now, beat the door of the vault with her hands. Somebody wildly suggested dynamite. Annabel turned to Jimmy, her large eyes full of anguish, but not yet despairing. To a woman nothing seems quite impossible to the powers of the man she worships.

"Can't you do something, Ralph—*try*, won't you?"

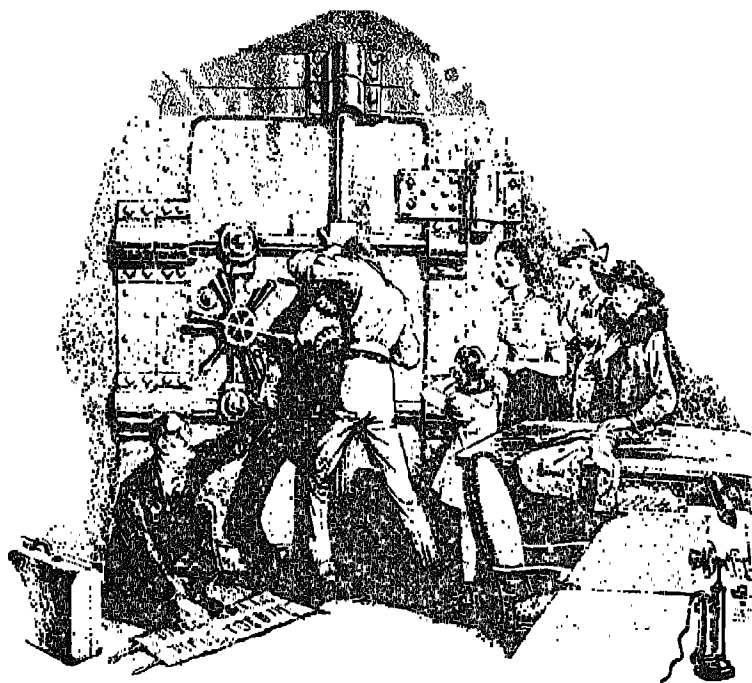
He looked at her with a queer, soft smile on his lips and in his keen eyes.

"Annabel," he said, "give me that rose you are wearing, will you?"

Hardly believing that she heard him aright, she unpinned the bud from the bosom of her dress, and placed it in his hand. Jimmy stuffed it into his vest pocket, threw off his coat and pulled up his shirt-sleeves. With that act Ralph D. Spencer passed away and Jimmy Valentine took his place.

"Get way from the door, all of you," he commanded, shortly.

He set his suitcase on the table, and opened it out flat.



From that time on he seemed to be unconscious of the presence of any one else. He laid out the shining, queer implements swiftly and orderly, whistling softly to himself as he always did when at work. In a deep silence and immovable, the others watched him as if under a spell.

In a minute Jimmy's pet drill was biting smoothly into the steel door. In ten minutes—breaking his own record—he threw back the bolts and opened the door.

Agatha, almost collapsed, but safe, was gathered into her mother's arms.

Jimmy Valentine put on his coat, and walked outside the railings toward the front door. As he went he thought he heard a far-away voice that he once knew call "Ralph!" But he never hesitated.

At the door a big man stood somewhat in his way.

"Hello, Ben!" said Jimmy, still with his strange smile. "Got around at last, have you? Well, let's go. I don't know that it makes much difference, now."

And then Ben Price acted rather strangely.

"Guess you're mistaken, Mr. Spencer," he said. "Don't believe I recognize you. Your buggy's waiting for you, ain't it?"

And Ben Price turned and strolled down the street.

## A COMPARISON \*

by John Farrar

Apple blossoms look like snow,  
They're different, though.  
Snow falls softly, but it brings  
Noisy things:  
Sleighs and bells, forts and fights,  
Cosy nights.

But apple blossoms when they go,  
White and slow,  
Quiet all the orchard space,  
Till the place  
Hushed with falling sweetness seems  
Filled with dreams.

\* From *Songs for Parents* by John Farrar. By permission of the Yale University Press, publishers.



## THE BRAVEST SOLDIERS

*by* Walt Whitman

Brave, brave were the soldiers (high named today) who  
lived through the fight;  
But the bravest press'd to the front and fell, unnamed,  
unknown.

## SEBAT FLIES HIGH \*

*And now let Sebat tell one!*

by Chief Henry Red Eagle

“Whoo-hoo-hoo-hoo!”

The hoarse, questioning cry of an owl sounded through the woods.

A heavy frost during the preceding night had made hunting almost impossible, for the crunch of leaves at every step disclosed our position; and though we started several deer, not one of the four of us had been able to get a shot. We returned to camp empty handed, and were now seated round the evening fire with a good supper under our belts.

“The only way to hunt under conditions like these,” growled Bill, who had been a lieutenant in the aviation corps during the Big Fuss, “is with an airplane and a machine gun!”

“Speaking of airplanes,” said Doc, “did you see that fellow who flew over this afternoon? Who in thunder would have expected to see an airplane so far in the wilds!”

“We aim to please,” grinned old Sebat, our guide. “All you do is ask for it and we perduce.”

“Oh, is that so?” said Doc. “Then produce a deer apiece, you old bluffer, so we can go home.”

Sebat, who had guided Doc for twenty years, came back at him with a grin. “I’ll do that all in good time,”

\* By permission of the author and *The Open Road for Boys Magazine*.

he promised. "Two of you have had standin' shots and both missed, and you and Bill barge through the woods like a herd of stampedin' elephants, to scare all the game from here to Madawaska. These deer are wild and you got to act accordin'."

"What do you suppose brought that flyer way up here, Sebat?" Bill wanted to know, still thinking about the airplane he had seen.

"He was the fire patrol," replied the Indian. "They've been usin' planes lately. Prob'ly the lookout on Katahdin spotted the smoke of our campfire and sent Corbin over to 'vestigate."

"Corbin? Has he a scar across his cheek? Walks with a limp?"

"Yup, that's him all right. Not much for looks but a square shooter."

"I thought so. 'Gaswagon' Corbin! I knew him in France. He broke in as mechanic for Beachey thirty-odd years ago, when flying was in its infancy. He's one of its pioneers."

"Tarnal good man," agreed Sebat, "but as a flyin' pioneer he wasn't so awful early. Way back in '84, I flew over three hundred miles myself!"

"Eighty-four!" exclaimed Bill. "Why, that's more than fifty years ago. Flying was hardly even thought of. The Wright brothers didn't take off at Kitty Hawk until 1903, and they were the first to fly. As a matter of fact, the airplane didn't come until after the automobile."

"Jest the samey, I flew to Boston from Dollar Pond




back in '84 when these here Wright brothers were wearin' knee britches," said Sebat, doggedly.

"Tell us about it," urged Doc.

We settled back to listen as the aged guide proceeded to clear his throat and to fill his pipe from a villainous looking plug.

"Well, sir," he began, "I was only a kid then, but I'll never forget that flight if I live to be a hundred. You see, my father used to make canoes, snowshoes, toboggans and baskets. He took me along with him to help gather the material, and one year we made camp at the head of Ambajejus, over Katahdin way. It was late November and we'd gathered quite a good supply of ash and cedar, as well as a stray moose and a deer or two; and we were waitin' for the freeze-up, so's we could tote the stuff out by team, there bein' sev'ral loggin' operations near by whose hosses we could hire.

"One night as we sat in camp after a hard day, we heard a flock of migratin' geese fly over. It reminded Dad that Thanksgivin' was comin' on and he thought it would be nice to have a bird for dinner, even if it wasn't anything but a pa'tridge. So early the next mornin' I took his gun and struck out to the south'ard. 

"Usually pa'tridges and ducks were plentiful, but there'd been a cold snap the night before and, like it was today, the woods was noisy as all get out. Well, I hunted half the forenoon without seein' a feather and I was plumb disgusted as I sat down on a log to rest a minute. I hadn't been there two seconds when off to my right I heard the

honk of a goose, comin' from the direction of Dollar Pond which sets in a basin o' rock surrounded by ridges as round as Natur' can make 'em. It isn't more'n fifty yards across and even on the hottest days of summer, the water is as cold as ice and clear as crystal. I figgered that the goose I'd heard was a straggler that had become tired and dropped out.

"While I crept up with my gun held ready, the honkin' grew louder and louder and when I reached the ledge and could look down, my heart almost stopped beatin', for there below me was the doggonedest sight I've ever seen before or since. That little pond was plumb covered with a big flock of geese! Caught by the sudden freeze of the night before, they'd got stuck fast in an inch and a half of black ice!

"All right, laugh! I wouldn't have believed it either if anyone had told me. I was so flabbergasted that all I could do was to goggle at 'em and wonder how I could kill the greatest number with the little ammunition I had, for it never occurred to me to club 'em.

"Fin'ly I decided to go right amongst 'em, line up and get as many as I could, then reload and shoot again. So I slid out on the ice on my belly, lined up six or eight with my sights and whango!

"Well, sir, the sound of that gun goin' off there in that hollow surrounded by rocky ledges was like to the blast of a cannon and its echo bounced from crag to crag. The next thing I knew them birds all rose at once, with the darndest squawkin' and flappin' of wings. And I swan to

man if they didn't lift that sheet of ice clear away from shore—with me aboard!

"The ice was as clear as glass and through it I saw the ground drop away. When we was up above the trees, the leader, a whoppin' big gander, circled a couple o' times, then headed south'ard. Well, sir, there I was! High in the air with a flock o' geese, helpless, with nothin' but a flimsy sheet of ice atween me and the Happy Huntin' Ground. Stretchin' away for a hundred miles on either side lay a wilderness of forest with only a few scattered trappers and loggers in it. As the full force o' my predic'ment struck me, I began to yell. I was crazy wild and I even thought of jumpin'; but instead I grabbed the nearest neck and hung on for dear life.

"Straight over Pemadumcook Lake we flew. To my left I could make out the Penobscot River, windin' through the woods like a silver-backed snake, then the scattered farms of back-roads settlers and a small town or two. All sorts o' things went through my head, thoughts o' the folks at home, how I was goin' to get back, and what the people below would say if they knew I was flyin' a mile in the air over their heads and goin' like the wind. To add to my troubles, the sun came out hot and began to melt the ice, while I sat there hardly darin' to move for fear I'd drop through and be hurtled to Kingdom Come!

"On and on we flew high, wide and handsome; over cities and towns, over rivers and forests, but I was too scairt to admire any scenery. And hungry! Sufferin' horn pouts, was I hungry!

"All this time the ice was growin' weaker and weaker under me, and 'way off in the distance I could see and smell the ocean. I broke out in a cold sweat as I wondered what I'd do if that big gander took it in his fool head to go out to sea; but he skirted the rock-bound coast and, as I found out later, headed over Boston.

"By this time, some of the birds had begun to tire and slow up from the long flight, and as I sighted a big open field in the distance, I got a sudden rush of brains to the head and began to sock the geese nearest me—in other words, I began to cut my motor!

"I wiggled over to the left edge, knockin' out geese as I went, and the dead weight caused the others to circle more and more, tiltin' into an airplane bank that grew tighter and tighter until I made a pancake landin' right in the middle of the field, unhurt and gosh-awful happy. I danced a little jig as I realized that I'd done what no other human had ever done before; for that flight made just before Thanksgivin' Day back in '84, was the first flight ever made by man! 'Cept p'raps in balloons, o'course, but they don't count.

"I killed the rest of the geese and sold 'em, and had two hundred dollars left after I'd bought my car fare back home.

"And ever since that, round Thanksgivin' time, I've been lookin' for another small pond full o' geese!"

"Whoo-hoo-hoo-hoo!"

The hoarse, questioning cry of an owl sounded through the woods.

## TOO MUCH OCTOPUS \*

*Two men in a grim underwater  
battle against a hideous monster  
with a girl in its tentacles.*

by Robert Lewis Taylor

Teri saw my eight-foot spear and grinned at me. "Do we have to take that thing along on our octopus hunt this morning?"

It always amused him that I, an American living with the natives of Tahiti a few months for experience, should hunt octopuses like a Tahitian fisherman in American movies—with a spear.

Teri didn't need elaborate playthings. I'd lived with him and his family quite a while, and not once in hunting octopuses had he used a spear. All he ever needed was a

\* By permission of the author and *The American Boy*.



knife, a big fishhook tied to a stick to catch the octopus with, and a second stick for killing him.

The sea and sky were bright blue as the three of us—Nina, Teri, and I—shoved off in Teri's outrigger canoe for the octopus grounds. It was a perfect day for hunting. Only on days like this can you see far enough below the surface to spot the octopus, who changes color to blend with his surroundings.

Teri paddled steadily, and a mile out from the beach we came to the place where the coral rises to within a foot or two of the ocean's surface. This was our hunting ground.

Telling us to sit very still, Teri stood up in the rear of the canoe, paddling slowly and watching on both sides for octopuses. At intervals he knocked his paddle against the side of the canoe. When the octopus hears this knocking he thrusts his ugly head out of his coral den to see what is going on, and the fisherman spots him.

Since the octopus is a menace to game fish, Tahitians count each kill a personal triumph. Too, the tentacles make a very agreeable stew. The tender meat tastes like sweetbreads.

Nina, who had hopped out and was splashing along to get a shellfish, spotted the first octopus. "*Fee, fee!*" she screamed, scrambling for the canoe. Teri and I went over the side, Teri in the lead and I coming excitedly along behind, brandishing my spear.

Teri waded toward the octopus cautiously, his hooked stick poking out in front. The octopus's globular red

head protruded from his under-water den and his beady little eyes gleamed belligerently.

Teri inched his stick up to the den, then suddenly hooked the middle of the octopus's pulpy body. Bracing his feet, Teri yanked and yanked to bring him into the open, but he wouldn't budge.

"Kill him! Kill him!" Nina screamed in Tahitian.

I took Teri's other stick and got down on my knees to prod loose some of the octopus's tentacles, but just then out he came and fastened onto Teri's arm, his slimy tentacles clawing up toward Teri's face. Teri plunged his arm and the clinging octopus down into the water just in time to dodge the stream of black fluid the octopus spat. This fluid stings painfully if it gets into your eyes.

I danced around trying to get in a finishing lick with my club. When Teri brought his arm up again, I cracked the squirming mass hard. Two tentacles whipped out and caught around my arm. I changed the stick to my other hand and struck again. The octopus dropped into the sea. This was the opportunity Teri had been waiting for. He caught up the creature with one hand and, holding him above the water, battered him to death with his club.

Nina was so excited that she tumbled backward into the water and bruised herself on a coral head.

This octopus was average size—its tentacles about two feet long and as thick as a broom handle, its head and body the size of a volley ball. We stowed it forward and resumed our paddling.

But not for long. Teri sighted an octopus on his side just as I saw a pair of black eyes in a coral cave on mine. "*Fee!*" he cried. I shook Nina back down into the bottom of the boat. Teri jumped out and started for his find with his two sticks. I jumped out and churned toward mine, my spear cleaving water in front of me. At the coral head I paused. The octopus was holding fort well within the hole, with no intention of being coaxed out. I raised my spear and plunged it in. I scored a clean hit. My spear was all but wrenched from my hands. It was twisted and yanked violently. I hung on.

Suddenly, the octopus let up and burst out of the cave in a cloud of ink. Unable to see, I let out a frightened roar for Teri. My octopus loosened himself from my spear and smacked me in the chest. He clapped tentacles about my arms and neck.

"Teri!" I was genuinely afraid.

I heard Teri splashing through the sea. He grabbed my octopus and lifted it, with me hanging on, clear out of the water. All these native Tahitians are superbly built, but I had no idea what they could accomplish in an emergency. With one blow of his club Teri ended the creature's squirming. I unraveled myself and started mumbling some sort of excuse for my blundering. Teri was overwhelmed with mirth. He poked fun at my spear.

This specimen of mine wasn't such a giant as it had seemed to me; it was only a little larger than the first one we had caught. But it was the first octopus I'd tackled



alone, and its strength and agility had made me a little backward about grabbing it with my bare hands. Indeed, I never got so I could reach out and fasten onto a live, squirming octopus without all sorts of inward qualms.

Teri was pleased with our morning's catch and ready to return home, but Nina and I prevailed upon him to go out into the deep water farther out. I had visions of spearing a shark or some other sea monster and returning home a hero.

Teri had slowed up the boat and we were idly rising and falling with the swell when I noticed, as we passed over a particularly high castle of coral, the sudden retreat of a huge fish. Teri backwatered gently with his paddle.

"What is it?" Nina whispered.

"I'm going to find out," I said, and adjusted my goggles.

"No," Teri protested. "It's not safe. Stay in the canoe."

"I'll only go into the surface water." And with Teri shaking his head, I slipped over the side and went down, pretty sure it was a giant sea eel, peaceful enough if I didn't get too inquisitive.

When I was ten feet down, the largest octopus I had ever seen or read about shot out of the cave. I turned over convulsively in the water and wriggled for the surface. In my panic I blew out all my air and inhaled water. Bursting for air, I popped out of the water to my waist and clutched the canoe. The flimsy outrigger upended and Nina toppled into the sea, directly in the path

of the oncoming octopus. He whipped three or four tentacles around her and started back for his den.

Teri was over the side in an instant, knife in hand. Choking, I crawled into the canoe, tore the goggles from my smarting eyes and peered over the side. The octopus held the child with three tentacles, and the rest of them gripped the den. Nina was tearing at the tentacles, a pitifully agonized look on her face. She was blowing out a steady stream of bubbles. She wouldn't last long. Teri was slashing madly at the tentacles holding the monster to the coral, but the great strength of the octopus was too much for even Teri.

I grabbed my spear and dived clumsily over the side. Nina had almost ceased to struggle. Grabbing her leg to hold myself down, I aimed my spear between the thing's eyes and lunged in. I felt steel biting through flesh. The next minute the water was as black as pitch. But we were free! My lucky thrust had almost completely pierced his body.

Teri grabbed Nina and we shot to the surface, choking for air.

Nina was limp. Her face was ash-blue. Laying her in the bottom of the canoe, Teri worked on her without a word. We were both sick with the fear that she was too far gone. For nearly an hour she showed no life.

"Let me take her," I said.

Teri shook his head.

For a quarter of an hour more Teri worked. There was only the sound of his heavy breathing and of the sea lap-

ping at the canoe. I slid into the water and climbed into the front end of the canoe where I could watch Nina's face.

I felt awful. It was my fault.

I had scarcely got in when I noticed a flicker of her eyelids. I cried out to Teri, who quickened his tempo, his face showing encouragement for the first time. Soon Nina moaned and turned her head to the other side. She was breathing of her own accord!

We both shouted. I don't know what we shouted. It was a cry of joy, of thanksgiving.

Nina came to life crying and spitting up water. She was very sick. We let her cry and rub her face. She vomited sea water all the way home.

Teri hadn't a word of reproach for me and my silly whim to get out of the boat. But he didn't take me fishing for a long time after that. I spent the mornings shooting land crabs with my slingshot from the porch. They weren't good to eat, but the pigs liked them.



## THE BAD AXE FAIR ·

by Edgar A. Guest

*This is a true story, as so many of Edgar Guest's poems are. He and his distinguished friends, Dr. Charles and Dr. William Lyons Phelps, really do take "the kids" to the County Fair. Bad Axe is the name of the little town in Michigan where the Huron County Fair is held.*

"It's all too big and wonderful," said Billy Phelps to me.  
"The county fair at Bad Axe is the one I want to see.  
Chicago has the marvelous things, but when the summer's  
done

\* By permission of the author.

It's into Bad Axe we will go to have our day of fun.  
Then you and I and Dr. Charles will take the kids along  
To see the horses and the cows and mingle with the throng.

We'll wander through the cattle sheds, the winners to admire.  
We'll chat with friendly farming folk and talk of dam and sire.  
We'll tread once more that crowded hall where women folk display  
The things they've made throughout the year since we have been away.  
And then we'll do the poultry show and hear the roosters crow  
And live again the boyhood dreams we had so long ago.

We'll eat hot dogs and ice cream cones and wash them down with pop.  
At every loud-voiced barker's stand our merry group will stop.  
We'll venture every game of chance for blankets pink and blue.  
We'll purchase numbers on a wheel, and should we win a few  
We'll give them to the farmers' wives, and then with hearts elate  
We'll squander dimes upon a man to guess the children's weight.

We'll hear that red-garbed little band which never seems  
to rest.  
We'll stand in awe to see a man break rocks upon his chest.  
We'll ride the squeaking Ferris wheel; pitch rings at trinkets gay  
And miss the gaudy prize we want, and tired at close of day  
We'll march our youthful army home and solemnly declare  
No show upon the earth excels that Bad Axe County Fair.

ADIÓS! \*

by S. Omar Barker

*Author's note: This is the true account of a funeral, simple, dignified and touching, held at Eaglenest, New Mexico, in January, 1939. "Mac" McMullen was hunter, trapper, and mountaineer as well as old time cowboy. Dough-Belly Price is a ranchman at Eaglenest, formerly a star bulldogger and bronc-rider of the rodeos as well as working cowhand.*

In a valley high up in the mountains,  
With the wind like a knife on their cheeks,  
They carried ol' Mac to his resting  
When winter lay white on the peaks.

\* By permission of the author.

Behind come his fav'rite old pony,  
Led slow by an old Spanish friend.  
The saddle an' chaps, they was empty—  
Ol' Mac's trail had come to its end.

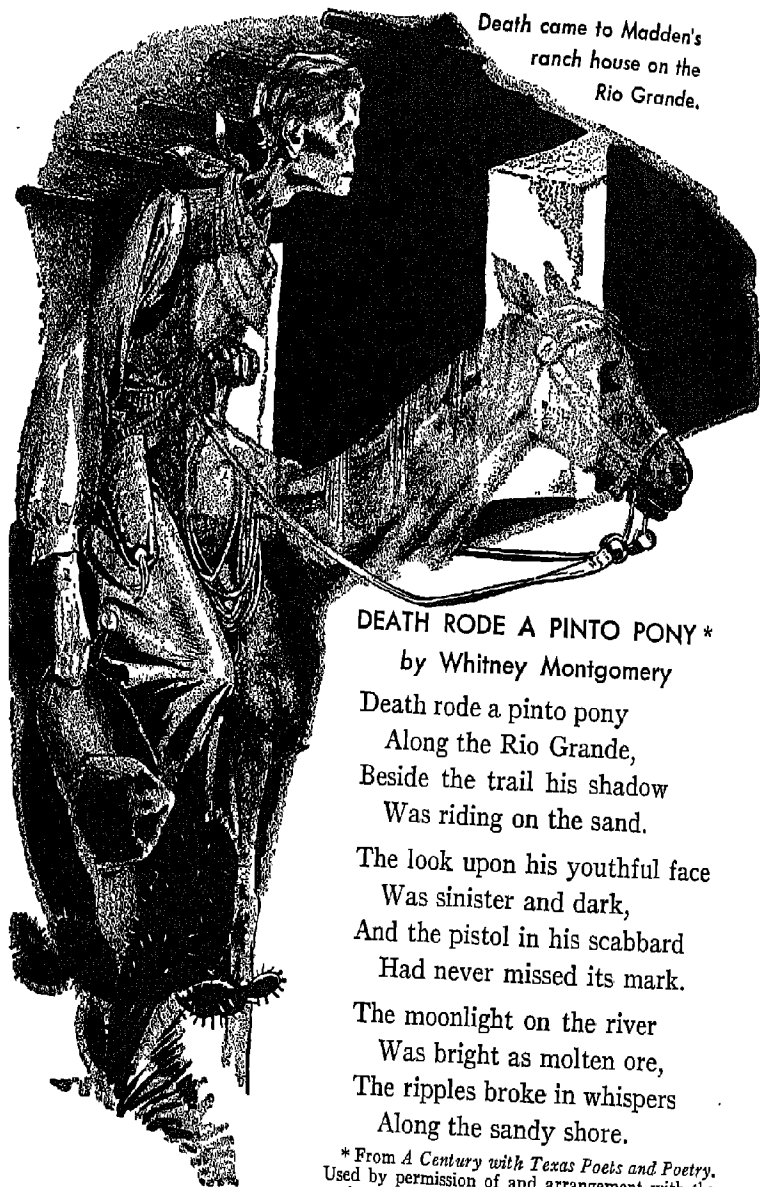
There wasn't no fancy procession—  
Just cowboys an' Indians an' such—  
Plain men of the saddle an' mountains,  
An' nobody said very much.

Ol' Dough-Belly Price done the preachin',  
Astride of his cream-yaller hoss.  
All he said was a few words an' simple  
About Mac, the old wagon boss.

"We all of us knew Mac McMullen—  
I couldn't say more if I'd try.  
He was one of our own, but he's left us.  
We've gathered to tell him goodbye.

"The range that he rode was a wide one,  
His friendships was many an' deep.  
So now that his saddle is empty,  
God rest him at ease in his sleep!"

'Twas thus near old Taos in the mountains,  
With white winter peaks looming close,  
They carried a *man* to his resting,  
An' quietly said: "Adiós!"



*Death came to Madden's  
ranch house on the  
Rio Grande.*

### DEATH RODE A PINTO PONY \*

by Whitney Montgomery

Death rode a pinto pony  
Along the Rio Grande,  
Beside the trail his shadow  
Was riding on the sand.

The look upon his youthful face  
Was sinister and dark,  
And the pistol in his scabbard  
Had never missed its mark.

The moonlight on the river  
Was bright as molten ore,  
The ripples broke in whispers  
Along the sandy shore.

\* From *A Century with Texas Poets and Poetry*.  
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author and *The Kaleidograph Press*.



The breath of prairie flowers  
Had made the night-wind sweet,  
And a mockingbird made merry  
In a lacy-leafed mesquite.

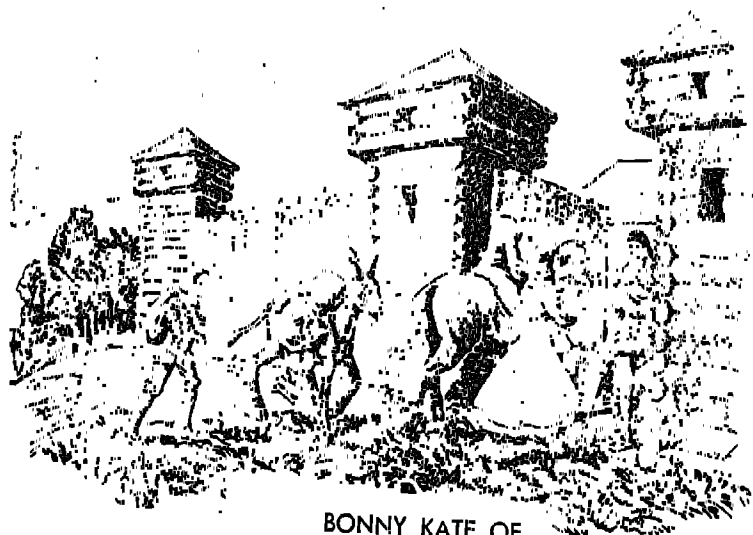
Death looked toward the river,  
He looked toward the land,  
He took his broad sombrero off  
And held it in his hand,  
And Death felt something touch him  
He could not understand.

The lights at Madden's ranch-house  
Were brighter than the moon,  
The girls came tripping in like deer,  
The fiddles were in tune,

And Death saw through the window  
The man he came to kill,  
And he that did not hesitate  
Sat hesitating still.

A cloud came over the moon,  
The moon came out and smiled,  
A coyote howled upon the hill,  
The mockingbird went wild.

Death drew his hand across his brow,  
As if to move a stain,  
Then slowly turned his pinto horse  
And rode away again.



## BONNY KATE OF TENNESSEE \*

*Bonny Kate of Daisy Fields, the hand-  
somest girl in the frontier country—  
escapes, hardships, poverty, honors—  
of such is the life of this pioneer girl.*

*by Eleanor Sickels*

In the summer of 1776, while the Continental Congress at Philadelphia was declaring "these colonies . . . free and independent states," the alarm of an Indian war blazed along the valleys of East Tennessee. The terrible Cherokees were on the warpath! Nancy Ward, whose mother was a sister of Chief Atta-culla-culla, but whose father was a white man, had sent warning to the settlements. From cabin to cabin up and down the Nolachucky River ran the word—"Old Abraham, the fierce Cherokee

\* From *In Calico and Crinoline* by Eleanor Sickels. Copyright 1935 by Eleanor Sickels, by permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

chieftain, is leading his braves with fire and tomahawk to lay waste our cornfields and massacre our people!"

There was nothing to be done about the cabins and growing corn. But the men slung their rifles over their shoulders, tucked their tomahawks and hunting-knives into the belts of their buckskin shirts, and prepared for battle. And the women tied bags of meal, wooden plates, and a precious pewter spoon or two to the pack horses, took the littlest babies in their arms, and with the older children tagging along behind set out for the protection of Fort Watauga.

So it happened that at dusk on a summer evening Catherine Sherrill found herself standing with her mother and sister and younger brothers at the gate in the Watauga stockade. She was a strong, tall girl of twenty-two, with snapping black eyes and a mass of dark-brown hair. The youth who opened the gate to them knew her at once, for already it was being said that Catherine Sherrill of "Daisy Fields" was the handsomest girl in the frontier country, and the fame of her swiftness of foot and her reckless horsemanship had flown up and down the border.

"Welcome, Mistress Sherrill," he said to Catherine's mother, "and you, too, Mistress Catherine, and all of you. Have you heard the news?"

"Nay," said Catherine, answering for her mother, "not unless you mean that we of the Nolachucky stand to lose our homes and crops. That news we know too well!"

"Captain Sevier has beaten the Indians under Dragging Canoe at Island Flat," said the other eagerly. "Not a

man of our men is lost. Dragging Canoe hath fled. Captain Sevier is here now; so is Captain Robertson, and we have thirty men in arms. But the redskins dare not attack the fort now."

"God grant it," said Catherine's mother, fervently. "Now show us to our cabin, young man."

At earliest dawn the cabins within the palisade were all astir. The women were gathering in the open space in the center armed with milk pails. For as there was no room for the cattle inside the enclosure, they were kept in the woods near by, and this morning several women had made up their minds to venture out to milk them. No one dreamed but that the Indians were still fleeing after their recent defeat.

Catherine hummed softly to herself as she pushed her head against the cow's soft flank and with skillful fingers drew downward the warm stream of milk. It was a lovely morning, and she was young. The thought that danger pressed in from the woods all around her only made her heart beat higher. She did not want to die, of course, but she was not afraid. Only one thing terrified her—the thought of being taken prisoner. She shuddered to remember the poor lad who had been burned alive only the other day almost within sight of the fort, as she had been told last night. And there was the tale of Mrs. Bean, one of the earliest settlers on the Watauga, who had twice been threatened with death and twice escaped in the nick of time. The second time she had been tied to the stake and the torch was only an inch or two from the brush about her

feet when Nancy Ward, the white people's friend, had pleaded for her and for her free. No, whatever happened, Catherine did not mean to be taken captive.

As she rose from the stump on which she had been sitting, the deed done, Catherine suddenly felt her body go rigid with horror, while her eyes stared unbelievably at a

spot in the trunk of the great oak under which the cow was tied. An arrow was buried deep in the bark, its shaft still quivering from its flight. At the same instant the woods echoed and re-echoed to the wild warwhoop of the Cherokees.

Catherine ran. From wherever they had been in the woods near by, the other women ran, too, and they all headed for the great gate in the palisade. As they came out into the clearing about the fort, Catherine saw one woman fall, shot down by an arrow. She saw another seized by an Indian and dragged off into the forest. Then, as she ran on, with arrows and rifle fire like hail around her, she saw the great gate swing open, and shut behind the other women.

She too had started toward the gate, but an Indian headed her off, and she had to swing around toward the



back of the fort. There was no gate here, only eight feet of blank stockade. Though she could outrun, outride, and outjump all the other girls in the mountains, could she leap an eight-foot palisade? It was her only chance. She reached the stockade, made a mighty effort. Someone on the other side was trying to help her and caught her hand over the top. But, alas, whoever it was slipped and fell back inside—and she, Catherine, fell back outside, with arrows and rifle shot still spraying around her and the Indians almost upon her.

It was now or never! Death or freedom! She would not live a captive—had she not sworn it? Struggling to her feet, she gathered her strength to leap again.

Someone else inside the fort was calling to her, “Jump, my bonny Kate, jump!” She did not know who it was—she hardly heard what he said—but she knew at least that someone would be there again to help her over. She jumped a second time.

This time she made it. Whoever it was inside the fort grasped her firmly as she leaped and helped her over the pointed stakes of the stockade. Down she dropped on the inside—into the arms of a tall, handsome stranger.

“A brave lass for a foot-race, my bonny Kate!” he cried. The others, crowding about with their congratulations, told her that this was Captain John Sevier, the victor of Island Flats.

“I would gladly go through all the peril and effort again,” Catherine often said afterward, “just to fall into his arms and feel so *out of danger*.”

So this was how Bonny Kate Sherrill earned her nickname. And of course she and the tall, handsome soldier fell in love and were married. But that was not until four years after Bonny Kate's famous race; for at that time Captain Sevier had a dearly loved wife already, back in Virginia, and a large and flourishing family of children. In fact, when in the summer of 1780, some months after the first Mrs. Sevier's death, Kate became Sevier's second wife, he presented her with ten step-children, ranging from eighteen months to eighteen years in age! But neither Indians nor large families could daunt Catherine Sevier.

There was great merry-making at the Sevier plantation on the Nolachucky to celebrate the wedding. One day they gave an enormous barbecue. The big "log mansion" and the yards were overflowing with all the neighbors, high and low, from miles around. In the field near the house they were roasting a whole ox. Tonight there would be merry jigs and reels danced to scraping fiddles; tomorrow there would be a horse race. Catherine, in her homespun best, her eyes bright with proud happiness, looked taller and stronger and more handsome than ever. "Nolachucky Jack," or "Chucky Jack," as the Indians called her husband, gazed at his Bonny Kate with loving pride.

In the midst of the gay confusion there was a thunder of hoofs along the road, and a rider dashed up, his horse covered with foam. It was Colonel Shelby, leader of the militia in the neighboring county. He had ridden post-haste for sixty miles with his message.

"Ferguson and his British are threatening to cross the

mountains and attack our settlements! We must do something quickly—but what is best to do. What can we do?"

So much Catherine heard. Then her husband, with a face become suddenly grave, drew Colonel Shelby into an inner room, and that was the last anybody saw of him for the rest of the days of merry-making. The two were planning, Catherine found out later, how they would gather the frontiersmen together and cross the mountains eastward before the British could cross them westward. They would fall upon Ferguson unawares and strike a blow for the Revolution.

For all this time, while Chucky Jack was fighting Indians in the Watauga country, the Revolutionary War was going on east of the mountains. This was its darkest hour in the South, when the enemy held most of the Carolinas, and the country both east and west of the mountains swarmed with Tories. But while she thought of these things in her heart, Catherine had to smile at her guests as if nothing were troubling her.

The muster was set for September 25th at Sycamore Shoals. Before that time it would be hard to say who was busier, Chucky Jack or his Bonny Kate. He had to round up two or three hundred militiamen to match the force promised by Colonel Shelby, rouse the soldiers of the patriot officer McDowell, who had been defeated and had taken refuge at Watauga, and somehow find money to equip and feed the little army.

As for Catherine, she had determined to outfit her own men with her own hands. From dawn to dark she moved



back and forth before the great spinning-wheel in the chimney corner, with deft, easy movements giving the wheel just the proper fillip with the little wooden peg in her right hand, guiding the wool with her left hand just so on to the spindle. Then when the thread was spun, she stretched it on the loom. Back and forth flew her shuttle, from dawn to dark and on into the night by the flickering light of pine knots and candles. Smooth and fine the cloth came out. Lastly, she cut it to measure, and sat down to sew it into shirts and breeches, every stitch, of course, taken by hand. No men should have better clothes for this expedition than John Sevier and his two eldest sons.

Later, when people wondered at this feat of Catherine's, she would say jauntily, "If every one of my husband's children had been a boy and



have too, though she had only six or seven weeks to do it.

It had been planned from the first that Joseph should go, as he was already eighteen, but nobody except his stepmother knew how much sixteen-year-old James wanted to go too. He pleaded so hard that Catherine made an outfit for him, but at first they said nothing to his father.

On September 25th, Sycamore Shoals was a scene of bustling activity. The women and girls, in their frontier linsey-woolsey, had come from the mountains all around to cook one last breakfast for their men and wave them farewell. The men and boys were nearly all mounted on mettlesome horses, and very brave and eager they looked in their homespun or deerskin hunting-shirts and their leather leggings, carrying blankets and knapsacks and armed with rifles, tomahawks, and hunting-knives.

Young James was standing by his stepmother, clad in the new outfit she had made him and hugging his rifle.

"Here, Mr. Sevier," called Catherine in her clear, strong voice, "is another of our sons who would set off with his father and brother to the war. But he has no horse, poor lad, and 'tis a long way to walk!"

James's father drew rein beside them. When he saw the flushed, eager face of the boy, he nodded approvingly. James got his horse and rode away with the others. The fight these bold frontiersmen fought and won east of the mountains was the important battle of King's Mountain.

The Indians were on the warpath again by the time the militiamen got back a few weeks later, and from that time on for some fifteen years Catherine Sevier had the job of

being the wife of the greatest Indian fighter of the border. She rose to it like the dauntless frontierswoman she was. The house at "Plum Grove," as the Sevier plantation was called, was built strong and sturdy, with heavy walls and portholes like those of a fort. Here Catherine and her family stayed in peace or in war. They would never deign to go to the blockhouse, no matter how full the woods were of hostile braves.

"I would as soon die by the tomahawk and scalping-knife as by hunger," Catherine would say when the neighbors begged her "to fort." "The wife of John Sevier," she would add proudly, "should know no fear."

And indeed she knew none. While the Revolutionary War lasted, she found the Tories more dangerous than the Indians. Once a lawless group of them came to the house, demanding that she tell them where her husband was.

"We aim to hang him to that tree yonder," one of them said with an evil leer.

Of course Catherine would tell them nothing.

"Tell, or I shoot!" said he, pointing a pistol at her.

"Shoot then!" she cried in haughty defiance. "I'm not afraid of death!"

"That woman is too brave to die," said the leader of the band, laying his hand on the ruffian's bridle. So they rode away.

Another time a neighbor named Mrs. Dyke, whose husband was a notorious horse thief of Tory leanings, came to Catherine at Plum Grove begging some corn meal and bacon. The generous Seviers always had given her food

whenever her good-for-nothing husband left her to starve while he was off on one of his escapades. The women went to the smokehouse, but as Catherine laid her hand on the latch, Mrs. Dyke burst into tears and fell at her feet.

"Oh, madam," she sobbed. "I love my husband, but you have been so good to me, how can I let harm come to your husband?"

"My husband?" cried Catherine in alarm. "What of him?"

Then the poor woman confessed that she had overheard Dyke plotting to murder Sevier. Warned in time, the Seviers of course foiled this plot. But all Catherine's pleading could not stop the enraged neighbors from hanging Dyke to the nearest tree.

While Sevier was away on his Indian campaigns, Catherine had to run the plantation, which was larger and richer than most plantations in the frontier country. They even had a few slaves. Catherine had to manage the slaves and servants, oversee the growing and marketing of the crops, and take care of her immense family. Besides her step-children, she had eight children of her own, and all eighteen of John Sevier's sons and daughters grew up and married, all the girls having their weddings at Plum Grove. As if that were not enough, Catherine seems to have reared four orphaned grandchildren and a half-dozen assorted nephews and nieces. Furthermore, Plum Grove was from first to last famous for its generous hospitality. Small wonder that we are told Catherine Sevier was never a moment idle!

"If you are lazy, your blood stagnates in your veins," she would tell her children.

When Chucky Jack came home from his wars or from some business or political expedition, Catherine never knew how many guests, or what sort, he would bring with him. Once in an Indian campaign he took a hundred prisoners, largely women and children and, not knowing what else to do with them, he sent thirty of them home to his wife! She entertained them so well that at least ten of them positively refused to leave; and there they stayed for three years or more, lazing about the plantation, never doing enough work to pay their keep.

What they did do was to become the willing slaves of Catherine's little daughter Ruth, who was born about 1781. They called her "Chucky's Rutha," and made her a princess of the tribe. The little Indian girls were her playmates, and Catherine knew that whenever Ruth was with any of the Indians she was happy and safe. They taught her the lore of the forests, and she learned to speak Cherokee with them, and several other Indian tongues.

"When you grow up," they said, "you will marry a chief."

The odd thing is that Ruth really did marry a chief. His name was Richard Sparks. He was a white boy who had been captured by the Indians when only four, and grew up as playfellow to the sons of the great Indian chief Tecumseh. Adopted into the Shawnee tribe, he was actually made a chief with the Indian name of Shawtunte. But at sixteen he was ransomed by the whites, and soon

sought out General Sevier because of his fame in the Indian country.

He had been educated like an Indian, of course. He could not read or write, and even had to learn all over again to speak English. What was more natural than that Chucky's Rutha, now a blooming young woman and in considerable demand as an interpreter, should talk to him in his Indian tongue and teach him English and the other things he had had no chance to learn before? So they fell in love, and the Princess Rutha married her chief.

As the years went by, John Sevier became more and more powerful in the country west of the Alleghenies. Settlers were pouring into East Tennessee, and the frontier moved westward. For a while in the 1780's Sevier served as the first and last governor of the State of Franklin, named after Benjamin Franklin. This "state," which took in most of what was later called Tennessee, wanted to break off from North Carolina, which owned the land, and come into the Union as a separate state. But North Carolina objected, and so did many people in Franklin itself.

Those were exciting days for everyone connected with General Sevier. The quarrel between the governor and his enemies almost came to civil war. Slaves were seized from Plum Grove plantation, and a half-hearted sort of battle was fought to get them back. To cap the climax, the governor's enemies persuaded North Carolina to order his arrest on a charge of treason for having headed Franklin government, and he was carried across the mountains in

irons. The story goes that it was Catherine, his faithful wife, who planned his dramatic rescue. When he once got back home, no one ever dared try to arrest him again. He had too many friends.

When Tennessee became a real state in 1796, Sevier was chosen first governor. He was governor for six years, and then, after a break, for six years more. Catherine was a middle-aged woman now, moving with commanding presence among her servants and her sons and daughters. The governor's home was more famous than ever for its hospitality, and the governor's wife welcomed many a distinguished guest. Once the two little princes of Orleans came from far-away France. That was the only time, it is said, that Catherine ever allowed the precious carpet, an admirer had given her husband, to lie on the floor over night. For in those days it was an unheard-of thing for anyone west of the Alleghenies to own a carpet. So Catherine would spread it carefully on the floor to honor some noted guest, then roll it up again and carefully lay it away.

This was one of the treasures she took with her when at last she left East Tennessee and went to live in a little mountain cabin called "The Dale" many miles farther west. John Sevier had died in 1815, full of years and honors, while he was busy putting into effect one of young Andrew Jackson's treaties with the Indians. All Catherine's children and step-children were grown up and had homes of their own. So she built this cabin in the mountains, like an eagle's nest, and there she lived out her years, alone except for three or four Negro servants.

One who knew her then has described how proud and strong and queenly she was even when lonely and old. She wore a little white cap with black trimmings, and at her side hung a great bunch of keys. She had a hearth rug in front of the fireplace in her mountain cabin, and there she would sit, very stiff and straight, with her workbox on the table near by, and her Bible, perhaps, lying open on her lap. On the wall hung her husband's old army hat. "The aged eagle," said this friend, "had lost her mate."

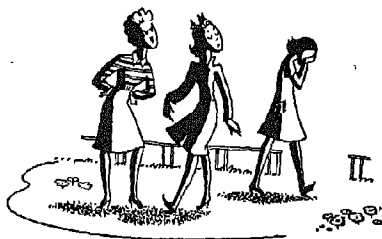
In 1836, while she was eighty-two, Catherine Sevier's favorite son Samuel moved to Russellville, Alabama, and she took the hard journey to be with him. But only a few months later Bonny Kate reached the end of all her pioneering.



## ARE YOU SQUARE?

### A Self-Test

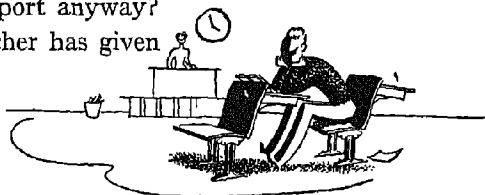
If you can answer "yes" to these questions without any hesitation, you're a pretty square person.



1. Your chum has been rude to another student just because the other student comes from a poor family. Will you let your chum see that you don't like the way he or she is acting?

2. Your teacher has given you credit for a book report you haven't done. Will you do the book report anyway?

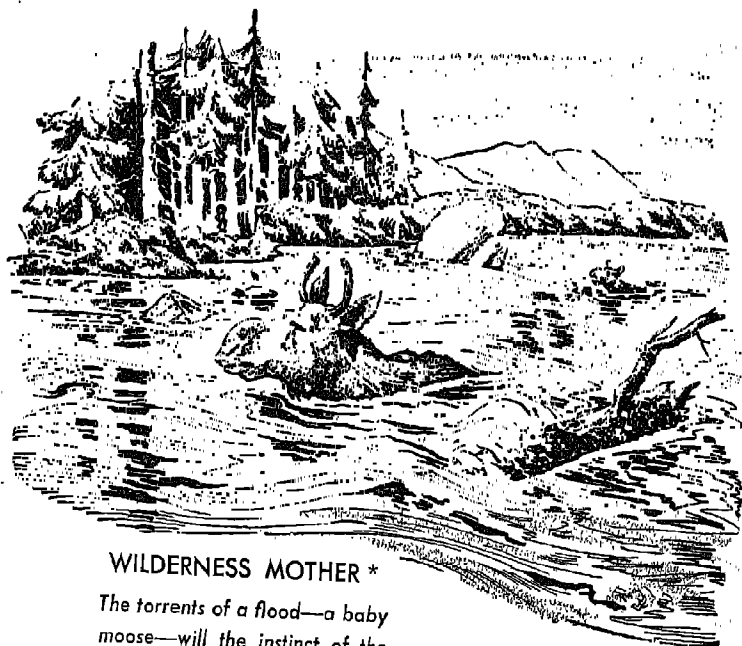
3. Your teacher has given



you fair warning that unless your work is brought up to date before a certain time you will be asked to remain after school every night until it is done. You pay no attention to the warning and the day comes. Can you take your punishment without complaining?

4. You have heard some unkind gossip about another student. From what you know about that student, you feel practically sure the story is untrue. Will you be square enough not to repeat the story?





### WILDERNESS MOTHER \*

*The torrents of a flood—a baby  
moose—will the instinct of the  
cow moose save her baby?*

by Mona E. Matheson

The Sunwapta was flooding. John and I both welcomed the excitement it promised us, for it was happenings of this kind—a storm, a forest fire, a river in flood—that alone broke the monotony of our existence there at our isolated homestead. We were the sole occupants of a valley in the Canadian Rockies, fifty miles from Jasper, Alberta, the nearest town. Sometimes we wished that there were neighbors; and always we wished that we had children.

We watched the Sunwapta closely all day. John had driven a stake, marked off in feet and inches, at the water's edge. All day we kept running out from our cabin to look at it. In the afternoon, when we found that the water

\* By permission of the author.

was rising six inches to the hour, we knew we were in for a real flood. At supper we could talk of nothing else. Then, without waiting to wash the dishes, pausing only long enough for John to roll and light his cigarette, we hurried down to the riverbank.

The stake was gone; so was a small bridge that had withstood many a flood. Upstream a four-acre island, formed by a back channel, was wholly covered.

John and I stood fascinated. The water, yellow and thick, now roared past us. Hundreds of uprooted trees rushed by, like great broken battleships, toward the falls and canyon below; from that canyon, we knew, they would emerge torn and frayed to matchwood.

John pointed across the river. A cow moose and her calf had come out of the bush and were standing on the steep bank directly across from us. Both looked back, as if they feared pursuit; possibly coyotes, or a cougar, had been after the young one. The calf was staggering, worn-out. It was all legs; John says it could not have been more than three days old.

Though she must have seen us, the cow moose paid no attention to John and me. For a minute she seemed to be studying the stream and its current. Then suddenly she leapt from the bank into the yellow flood and struck out for our side, with never a backward glance toward her calf. It was but a second or two before the baby moose plunged in too and disappeared from our sight, completely submerged; when it came up, it had been swept several yards downstream. It set out gamely to follow its mother, but

for every foot of headway it made it was carried four times as far toward the falls. Only its mother could help it now—but when I looked upstream the cow moose, ignoring her calf, was continuing straight across the river.

"You brute—you wicked, cruel mother!" I cried. (John told me afterward.)

Although a moose is a powerful beast, and a great swimmer, the cow had to battle hard against the current to come almost squarely across the river. She reached the bank a little below where we stood and—still without looking to see what had become of her baby, or stopping to shake the water from her coat,—crashed headlong into the forest.

John and I started to run along the curving riverbank. We had no hope that we could save the calf, but we simply had to keep that little dark head in sight. It was bobbing up and down like a forlorn cork. Trees were missing it by a hairsbreadth. Sometimes it was sucked under by the current, to emerge farther downstream. Always, however, it continued to make some headway toward our bank; it had passed midstream when John and I had to take a path through the woods where brush made the bank impassable.

We reached the river again at what ordinarily was a quiet pool of backwater, where the river bends sharply away. Now there was a great current sweeping around within the curving bank. As we reached its edge, we spotted the baby moose—it was being carried into that maelstrom, to be whirled around and swept out again into the main stream.

Then we stopped dead, for out of the bush across the bend from us crashed the cow moose. Now she saw her baby, and stopped as if to gauge the speed and course of the current. A moment later she hurled herself down the bank and out into the river. Finally, with perfect timing, she turned about to face the shore and braced herself against the current, just as the calf, still swimming, was swept against her flank.

Quickly the mother changed her position ever so slightly, so that the pressure of the current if it should sweep the calf away, would carry it closer to the bank. There she stood, waiting till her little one ceased to struggle and discovered that it was now in shallower water and could find a footing. Both then moved toward the bank, slowly and carefully, the mother still buttressing the calf against the thrust of the current. Soon the calf was only knee-deep in water. It wanted to stop there and rest, but the mother—now that she had overcome one hazard—no longer was contemptuous of our presence. She nosed her baby up the bank, and mother and calf disappeared in the woods.

Slowly John turned. Then—"What are you crying about?" But his voice wasn't very steady, and I knew I didn't have to answer.

## LOCOMOTIVE CHASES RABBIT \*

*Believe it or not!*

by Helen Wilcox

I've just come back from a "train ride" that could be possible only in Alaska, where fantastic things are the rule. It was a wild forty-mile dash on the "Kougerok Special" from Nome to the Gold Creek Mining Camp. The track, a genuine narrow-gauge affair; the "coach," a miniature covered wagon on wheels; and the "engine power," seven huge Siberian Husky dogs, each of which had more wolf than canine heritage.

The driver, Kaska, was half Russian, half Aleut. He grinned at my look of astonishment. The dogs were howling and barking and straining at the traces.

"Don' worry, jus' hang on. We go slow first, but by'm by, you see . . ."

At first we rattled comfortably along the narrow track, the dogs trotting in pleasant unison. We were soon out of sight of the town of Nome. Around us stretched the tundra, flat, treeless, thickly carpeted with fireweed and blue lupine.

Suddenly a rabbit crossed the track. And instantly our "engine," all seven parts of it, gave a howl of delight, and went in mad pursuit, pulling the coach right off the tracks. Kaska and I were jounced out. Across the tundra went the "Kougerok Special" in full cry, the unwieldy coach bumping over the ground. Kaska shouted and cursed.

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And finally they came back, shamefaced, tongues dripping. The "train" was put on the track again, and we went on.

An hour later we came to the brink of a downhill grade, and the dogs stiffened to a stop. Then, without so much as a "by your leave," they all jumped aboard! One big silver husky wolf climbed sociably into my lap, and snapped at another who apparently had the same idea. Kaska laughed as he gave the coach a push.

"That's all right, they always ride downhill. We go ten miles this way."

The grade was steeper than it looked. We shot downward at a speed that rocked us from side to side. We careened around hairpin curves and swooshed over bridges that spanned deep canyons. I didn't think we'd ever make it . . . but we did. And when the "train" finally came to a stop, the dogs barked noisily, leaped down and took their places, and trotted on towards our destination.

Kaska said this track was laid during the gold rush about thirty years ago. A small locomotive pulled freight to and from the mining camps along the Kougerok River. But it cost a lot to fuel the engine, and soon the companies began freighting by water, and the train stopped running.

Husky dogs, however, have to be fed, even in the summer months when they are not normally working. So the "dogomotive" idea was evolved, and has been very successful.

I asked Kaska if the company carried rabbit insurance. He grinned.

"Oh, dose dogs, dey don' go off the track much . . . jus' sometimes."

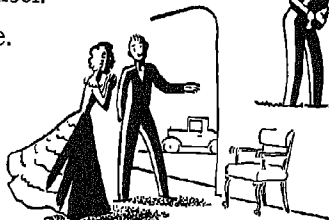
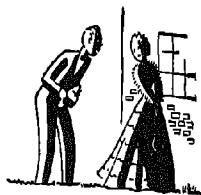
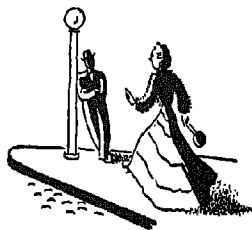
# WHAT TO DO IN SOCIETY

## A Self-Test

### I THE MEETING:

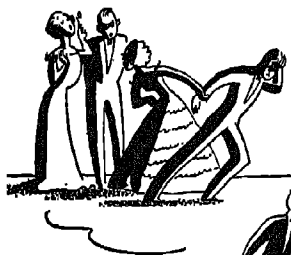
A boy and a girl are going to a school dance. Where do they meet?

1. On the street corner.
2. Near the school.
3. At her home.



### II THE INTRODUCTION:

The girl wishes the chaperons, Mr. and Mrs. Schoolteacher, to know her friend. How should she make the introduction?



1. She says, "Johnny, I wantcha ta meet Mr. and Mrs. Schoolteacher."
2. She points Johnny out to the chaperons when he is across the room.



3. She says, "Mr. and Mrs. Schoolteacher, this is Johnny Jones."



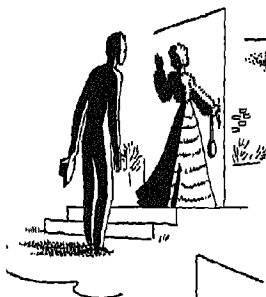
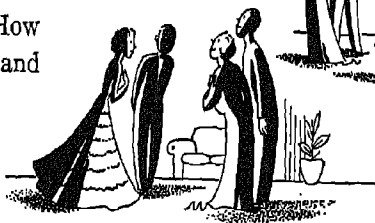




### III JOHNNY'S RESPONSE:

When he has been presented to the chaperons, what does Johnny do or say?

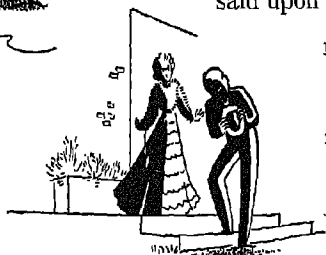
1. He grabs Mrs. Schoolteacher's hand, shakes it vigorously, and says, "Pleased ta meetcha."
2. He bows very low and says, "I am indeed charmed."
3. He says "How do you do?" and smiles.



### IV THE END

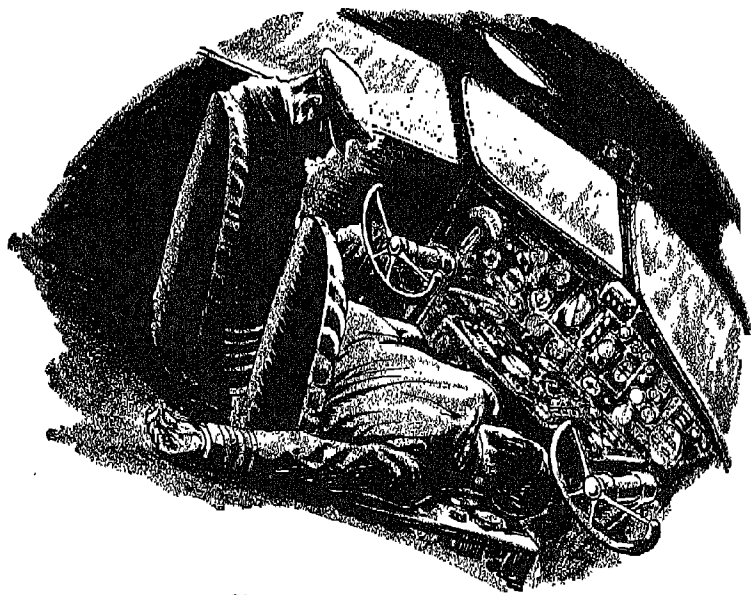
When Johnny has taken the girl home from the dance, what should be said upon leaving?

1. She thanks him for a pleasant evening.
2. He thanks her.



3. She suggests going to the movies the next night.





### SLEEPER PLANE TO THE COAST \*

*"There's something wrong up ahead.  
The plane's off keel, and Quinn and  
Bryant asleep—I can't wake them."*

by Frederic Nelson Litten

The clock in the terminal at Quesada Airport struck eleven; on the balcony under the clock the announcer lifted his megaphone and called:

"Sleeper section for the coast will leave in thirty minutes!"

Johnny Caruthers, at the lunch counter on the main floor, set down his coffee cup and glanced sharply through the window. It was a clear starry night with a bright Texas moon that dimmed the yellow boundary markers on the flying field. As he watched, a floodlight battery

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drenched the north-south runway in dazzling light, and down the hangar line a plane broke into thunder.

Johnny slid quickly from the stool, gave himself a hasty survey in the mirror back of the shiny coffee urn. His suit was wrinkled, but the change to a clean shirt in the washroom had helped some. The waitress was stacking dishes; no one in the crowded lobby noticed him. Johnny straightened to his full six feet, and holding out his hand as if in greeting, said:

"Glad to know you, Mr. Quinn. Confident I can make good, sir. I've done transport flying in the Air C-cor—"

His voice cracked, and he broke off grinning. That all-day ride in the supply truck from Fort Crockett had done things to his voice. But, voice or no voice, the job *had* to be his. Swinging determinedly, Johnny crossed the lobby to the information desk.

The operator at the switchboard shook her head.

"They're still in conference," she said. "I'm sorry."

"We're *both* sorry," answered Johnny. "If I could just talk with Mr. Reeves and Mr. Quinn together."

"Well," the girl hesitated, then laughed. "You surely deserve an interview, hanging around all night. I'll remind them that you're still here. It's the last chance. Mr. Quinn is flying the sleeper plane himself."

Johnny took out the letter from Mr. Reeves and read the concluding paragraphs again:

*"When your active duty with the Air Corps ends, get in touch with me. I shall be at Quesada Airport on the Texas border during the first week of Novem-*

*ber. We are putting on sleeper plane service to the coast, and there is a chance that I can place you.*

*You may be sure anything I can do for Bill Caruthers' son will not be overlooked.*

*Sincerely,*

*Gordon Reeves*

*Director of Flying*

*Midcontinent Air Lines."*

Folding the letter, Johnny dropped it into his coat.

"I'll wait awhile," he said. "There's a half hour before plane leaving time. Mr. Reeves won't overlook me."

A red light on the switchboard glowed, and the girl flipped a cord-plug into place.

"Quesada Airport," she said crisply. "Operations? . . . I'll connect you."

Johnny could hear the voice in the receiver, faint but urgent, then the girl looked up.

"It's the weather observer on Kite's Peak," she said.

"There's a storm over the mountains. They might cancel the sleeper plane—it's the first flight, you know. Then you could talk to Mr. Quinn and Mr. Reeves tomorrow."

Johnny smiled; a girl would say that. Not a chance for a canceled schedule. The sleeper plane was one of the newest type; a super-ship, equipped with every device for comfort and safety. And the air route to the coast was covered by radio beam.

He said, "They won't cancel the flight."

"No, I don't suppose they will," the girl replied. She

shivered. "I wouldn't ride that plane tonight for pay." The light on the switchboard blinked again, and she put through a call to Number One hangar. "It's Mr. Quinn," she whispered, "ordering the crew chief to turn on the cabin heating. He's going down himself to check the plane."

"Told you the flight wouldn't be canceled," Johnny said. He grinned. "You know, I think *I'll* go down to the hangar too—a surprise attack, as we say in the Air Corps."

The operator stared. "Air Corps!" she repeated. "Listen, are you an Army pilot?"

"Ex-Army," corrected Johnny. "You saw it on my application, didn't you?" But the girl's face puzzled him. "Anything wrong with the Army?" he inquired.

She hesitated. "No—nothing. Only—well, I wouldn't emphasize it when you talk to Mr. Quinn. He's hard-boiled—and he doesn't like the Army." She smiled. "I hope you get your job. Better hurry."

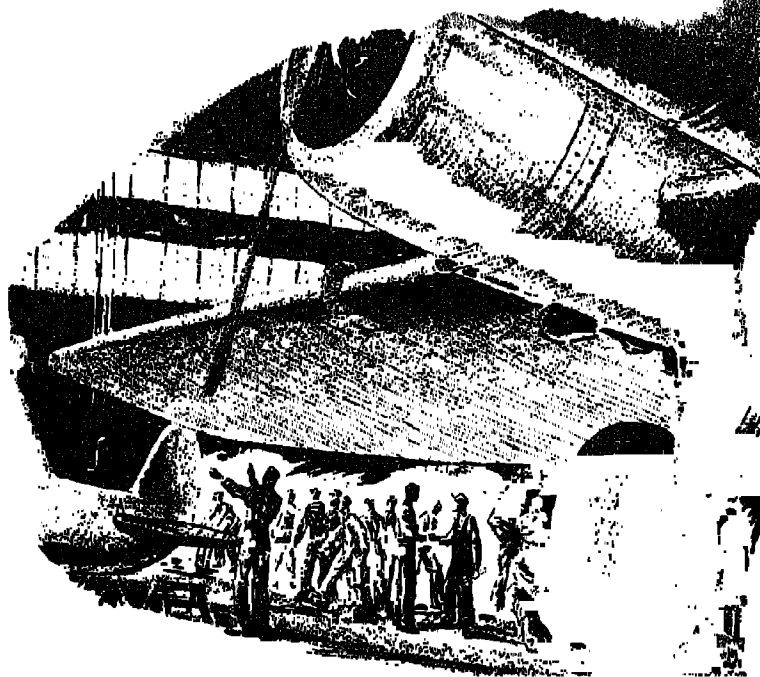
Johnny thanked her and turned for the terminal entrance. A sharp wind swept the hangar road; the wind tee spun in the cross-currents. "Not a good wind for the take-off," muttered Johnny.

He looked up at the flashing beacon over the control tower. Dust clouds whirled through the beam; and the sky looked black over the mountains to the west. A storm *was* due, all right. He ducked into the wind, wide shoulders bent, making for the open doors of Number One hangar.

There was a crowd about the doors, held back by a rope. And in the shadows stood the sleeper plane, her twin propellers idling with a soft elastic click. Johnny halted, awe in his keen blue eyes.

"What a plane!" he murmured. A thought came—some day he'd fly a ship like this. A far-off dream that was; there'd be months of waiting—months or years—while a fellow's name crept slowly up the "extra board" . . . Well, to fly a ship like that was worth the wait. And to work for a line like the Midcontinent that handled the western half of a coast-to-coast service. . . . He pushed through the crowd to the barrier rope, still studying the plane.

She had the "look of eagles." Yes, that expressed it. It wasn't her bulk; the big Army planes had more wing-



spread. But that smashing sense of power and speed! Twin tornadoes, seven hundred horsepower; low flat-cambered wings with a sharp sweep-back; everything faired to a knife-blade edge.

A service crew was busy about the plane. One man lay on a work-dolly underneath, where the exhaust siphon entered the cabin heater drum. The clink of his hammer echoed through the hangar; ended in a dull, peculiar "tunk," and the man rolled clear of the plane. He stood up, wiping his oily hands on a ball of waste, not far from the barrier rope. Johnny reached out and touched him.

"Any chance for a closer look?" he asked. "I'm in the flying game myself."

The mechanic shook his head.

"Have to get permission from the office. We got strict orders—" he broke off, staring at Johnny, his eyes round. "Lieutenant Caruthers!" he exclaimed. "Say, the world's a small place after all! You remember me. Joe Sciapi, 60th Service Squadron, Selfridge? I used to keep your P-12 runnin'."

Johnny grinned. He recalled Sciapi now. Not for his skill; he was a happy-go-lucky soldier, nicknamed by the crew "Thumb-fingers." But it was good to see someone from the field.

"Well, Joe," he said, "I never thought I'd find you working on civilian planes. Why'd you leave the Army?"

"Bugles," answered Sciapi briefly; "blowin' you into bed, and then outa bed again. But a mechanic is on his own around here. When a job comes up, you work fast

—as I've been doin' tonight, poundin' asbestos into that heater gland. But if there's a slack afternoon, sometimes the boss'll give you time off with pay. He's a good egg, Quinn."

"You mean Chief Pilot Quinn?" asked Johnny. "That's the man I'm looking for. Think he'll have a job for me, Sciapi?"

The mechanic gave him a startled glance.

"You aren't with the 94th, Lieutenant? Say, I never thought *you'd* check out of the Air Corps. Your father—why, they used t'say—I mean—" he broke off, juggling the ball of waste.

Johnny Caruthers knew what Sciapi meant. His father had served with the 94th when they called it the First Aero Squadron; his name was on the gold-starred list of wartime pilots in the Officer's Club at Selfridge. And in Johnny's trunk at home was a citation which began: "William S. Caruthers, for valor and sacrifice of self" . . . But that had happened almost twenty years ago; it was forgotten now. Brave deeds are not inherited; though the qualities from which they spring—well, Johnny hoped that *they* might be.

He said soberly: "The Air Corps is crowded, Joe, and I had eighteen months of active duty. Anyway, commercial flying has the future."

"That's true," Sciapi answered. But something in his face was puzzling, like the expression of the switchboard girl. "If I were you," he went on guardedly, "I'd forget about the Army service. The mail shake-up almost ruined this Air Line; since then, soldiers make Quinn see red.



The crew chief here had me scratch my service record off the application. You better do the same."

"I've turned mine in," said Johnny. He grinned, but the advice worried him a little, until he recalled the letter in his coat. Then he added: "I've a friend in the company who'll recommend me; Gordon Reeves."

The mechanic's eyes grew round again.

"Reeves! Say, he's Midcontinent's chief. I saw him here today—fat, bald man, with a scar over his ear." Sciapi opened the oval door of the cabin. "Climb in an' have a look; you might be flyin' this plane soon."

But Gordon Reeves was having trouble selling Johnny to Chief Pilot Quinn. The two men sat in Quinn's office in the terminal tower; Reeves, mild-mannered, soft of voice; the chief pilot, heavy-shouldered, with gray eyes that could be warm—or hostile. Just now they were hostile, and his voice held chill.

"We have six men on the extra board," he said. "Why should I hire this kid?"

"I knew his father, Mike—" began Reeves.

"Twice you've said that, Gordon," interrupted the chief pilot. His jaw tightened; he lifted a sheet headed "Pilot's Application" from the desk before him and began to read:

"Training: U.S. Army, Second Lieutenant's Commission, Air Reserve. Eighteen months' service, 94th Pursuit. Air hours to date: twelve hundred and six." . . . The chief pilot laid the sheet down. "Army trained—twelve hundred hours!" he said. Again he lifted the application, stared at it, and added in final disgust: "Age, twenty-one!"

"He'll outgrow that," remarked Reeves mildly.

"He won't outgrow the Army training," broke in the chief pilot harshly. "The Army tried to go commercial once. You've a short memory, Gordon, if you've forgotten the Army air mail."

"No," answered Reeves, "I haven't forgotten; it was a costly experiment for everybody. But the Army didn't have the ships. They were flying open-cockpit jobs, into sub-zero weather and blizzards. Instrument flying—but they had no instruments, only a turn-and-bank."

"Poor headwork to go up, then," said Mike Quinn. "A man's not supposed to sign the clearance sheet unless the plane's fit. If *our* pilots made such errors of judgment we'd pay out our earnings in crash claims."

The director shook his head and gazed through the office window. Quesada field was plain in the moonlight; brown-frosted turf, criss-crossed with paved runways like the British flag. The field stretched away a full half-mile; beyond it, mesquite desert; on the far horizon, cloud-capped mountains. Gordon Reeves gazed at the clouds.

"Errors of judgment? Mike, I wouldn't put it just that way. Those army pilots followed orders."

The chief pilot scowled. "My pilots follow orders; they mix judgment with 'em though. The idea behind the Air Corps training seems to be to turn out gallant troopers, light brigade boys. 'Theirs not to reason why'—and so on. But caution is needed more than courage if commercial aviation is to grow."

Gordon Reeves touched a thin white scar behind his temple.

"A bullet from a German machine gun did that," he said smiling. "The scar's about gone; but the memory's still strong. What you said—about caution and courage—makes me think of it now."

The telephone on the desk rang. Quinn answered the call, then pushed the instrument away.

"Bad weather over Kite's Peak. Bryant'll have to figure a detour around the storm." He rubbed his hands. "*That's* caution."

"About my war wound," persisted Reeves, still smiling, "It has to do with caution—and young Caruthers, too. You see, Mike, I flew with his father in the war; when the First Aero Squadron was on patrol in the Verdun sector. The day I got this bullet we were ordered up to photograph troop concentration back of Metz. The pictures were badly needed, but it wasn't flying weather. Heavy clouds; hide-outs for Boche pilots; something like that sky over the mountains there."

Once more Reeves looked out the window. And when he spoke again the smile had slipped from his face and left it grim.

"Caruthers didn't want to make the flight," he said, "but we had our orders. We went up. Caruthers was at the controls. I was the photographer. In a two-seater Salmson. Maybe you've heard of them, Mike. Badly rigged; you had to *fly* 'em every minute or they'd spin. I'd finished my pinpoints and was stowing the last plate-holder—when nine Fokkers came down out of the clouds. They were in range by the time we sighted them, and a tracer laid me on the cockpit floor. They didn't let Ca-

ruthers off that easy—but some men will carry on a long time, even if the hurt is mortal. He'd turned back for our 'drome when a bullet tore his hand away—the right hand."

Quinn straightened. Reeves went on:

"Caruthers brought the ship in. Made a good landing, too, they say. Of course, I didn't know."

"But his hand—the stick hand—" murmured the chief pilot. "And the plane—you said it wouldn't fly hands off?"

Reeves shook his head. "No, it wouldn't. The Salmsons weren't designed for fighting either; the pilot hadn't a chance against machine-gun fire. Caruthers knew that, of course. So, after the bullet tore his hand away, he lashed his wrist to the stick with safety wire and kept on flying for the 'drome. Would you call that caution, Mike, or courage? And young Caruthers—you see now why I'd like to put him on."

Mike Quinn drew his breath in sharply, but he did not answer. The room was still; a faint clatter of the teletypes in Operations drifted in, and the hum of the beam generator from the power station. A gust of icy wind rattled the windows, and Quinn reached for the telephone.

"Norther coming," he said. "It'll be cold over the mountains. I'll have 'em turn on the cabin heat in the sleeper." As he waited for the connection Quinn glanced at the office clock. "Suppose we go down to the hangars. I like to give the ship I fly a personal inspection, and *this* run must go through without a hitch. About young Caruthers; I'd rather not put him on the extra board. Some-

where else, maybe. Midcontinent's not hiring heroes; we want careful, cagey pilots."

Gordon Reeves began drawing on his coat.

"You're chief pilot, Mike," he said. "I'll find a place for Caruthers elsewhere."

Meanwhile in Hangar Number One Johnny Caruthers was inspecting the giant plane under the guidance of Co-Pilot Bryant, who had arrived to test his radio against tower signals and check the fuel and oil. Bryant was a pleasant fellow with four thousand hours on the West Coast air lines. He asked no questions, accepting Johnny as an air minded friend of Joe Sciapi's.

"Fifty-seven instruments on the board," he said, pointing to the instrument panel. "Oxygen tank for the high altitudes; everything. This gyro-pilot is great. You can set the dial on course and forget about control. The ship'll fly herself; the gyro bank-and-climb and directional gyro do all the headwork. Mr. Quinn—he's piloting tonight—will lift the ship off and set her down, and I'll make the station calls. The rest of the time we'll sleep."

Johnny laughed. He couldn't picture Bryant sleeping on the job. Cool, alert, he'd handle this cloud-ripper in his stride. The fifty-seven gadgets worried Johnny; he'd never seen such an array. A ship that would fly herself? It made him think of the man called Frankenstein and the monster that turned against him.

The cabin of the sleeper had a different effect. It was shiny and sleek and smart. A uniformed steward was

making down the berths, except in the section aft where there were deep upholstered leather chairs, chrome-fitted. Heat slots in the window frames flooded a warm gentle breeze. But there was one flaw; the breeze had a tainted smell.

Bryant sniffed distastefully.

"Paint on the exhaust siphon. Quinn will have somebody's scalp for that." He called to the steward: "Phillips, close these cabin slots. I'll leave 'em open in the pilot's coop till the odor burns out. Quinn and I won't mind."

While Phillips was closing the heat slots Johnny saw a sharp-chinned man duck under the barrier rope.

"It's Quinn," said Bryant.

Johnny's shoulders lifted—time for that selling talk! As he reached the cabin door, Quinn opened it.

"Who let you aboard?" he questioned, frowning. Johnny by force of habit, lifted his arm to salute—then quickly let it fall. About the worst thing he could do, if Quinn were anti-Army. He began:

"My name's Caruthers——"

The chief pilot's frown deepened, but a stout man Johnny hadn't noticed, stepped up holding out his hand.

"Caruthers?" he repeated with a friendly smile. "I'm Gordon Reeves. The switchboard operator said you might be here. Inspecting the sleeper, eh? Well, what's the verdict?"

"The ship—gets you," Johnny answered, and fumbled for a better phrase. But Mr. Reeves seemed pleased. He introduced the chief pilot, and Quinn gave Johnny a curt

nod. He walked away and Gordon Reeves drew Johnny aside.

"I'm afraid I held out false hopes, Caruthers," he said doubtfully; "the reserve list here is filled . . . I *could* place you at San Lucia, tending the radio beacon. Not much of a job; but our pilots make practice landings on the field each week, and I'll see that you get flying time." He added gravely: "It's a long road though, to the extra board."

Johnny nodded. "When do I start?" he asked.

The director laughed as if relieved.

"Well, you might ride this plane to San Lucia tonight, if the steward can find seat space. I'll speak to Mr. Quinn."

Chief Pilot Quinn stood by the wing talking with Bryant. Fragmentary sentences reached Johnny on the gusty wind: "Sleepers planes are for *sleeping*" . . . "Give 'em a smooth, safe ride——"

The chief pilot's voice was urgent. This flight meant a lot to Quinn; a new idea in passenger transport was under test tonight. "Smooth and safe"—yes, the ride would have to be just that. Well, why not? With those fifty-seven instruments the ship would fly herself.

Mr. Reeves returned.

"It's all right," he said. "You'll have to sit up; the scheduled stop for San Lucia is at four fifty-five . . . Better climb aboard. It's almost leaving time." He held out his hand. "I wish I could have placed you here; I'll be looking for something better."

As Johnny shook hands, the engines roared, and me-

chanics scattered from the path of the propeller blast. Quinn, in the pilot's seat, let the engines cascade down to idling speed, and Johnny ducked across the concrete to the plane.

The steward gave him a hand into the cabin.

"Take Seat Ten," he said, "next to the washroom."

Johnny moved down the aisle to the basket chair with a metal "10" on the safety strap. The heat was still off; chilly shivers chased along his spine. Up forward in the glass-partitioned control cabin, Quinn leaned from the window. The chief pilot waved his hand and the giant plane began rolling slowly down the concrete to the main gate.

Passengers filed in, a ground crew stowed baggage in the under-belly of the fuselage, then locked the cabin door. Mr. Reeves mounted the wing-step for a last word with the chief pilot. "Smooth and safe"—Johnny could imagine Mr. Quinn saying. He looked a bit on edge. Nothing strange about that, with a new ship taking off on her trial run.

The engines roared again; the plane trundled down the north-south runway in the landing-beam, swung in a half circle and stopped. In the traffic tower a green blinker flashed, and once more the plane slid forward.

Smooth and safe, that take-off. The sound-proof cabin muted the grunt of shock columns and the blare from the twin exhausts. Up into the night sky nosed the plane, sweeping over the red strip-lights on hangars and terminal tower. She circled the field, winding upward in wide spirals with the boundary markers fading out below.



Then Johnny felt a gentle forward sway. Quinn had leveled off—the sleeper plane for the coast was on her way. He straightened in the chair, held by a queer feeling of tenseness. Through the window the sky formed a huge inverted bowl, with a crinkled lip where the horizon met the mountain peaks. Passengers were making ready for bed; the hum of their voices mingled with the steady rumble of the engines. A man passed by, gripped Johnny's chair as the plane rolled slightly.

"Cold in here," he grumbled. "Steward says he can't give us heat for an hour. Pilot's orders."

Quinn was waiting till the paint burned off, then the heat slots could be opened. It had better be soon, Johnny thought; in half an hour they would be over the mountains, into the high freezing air. "Safe and smooth"—and comfort counted, too.

Johnny grinned. Commercial flying was surely different. Flight commanders in the Air Corps were always handing out uncomfortable missions, where you had to fly or crash. But the passenger lines played safe, with every device to make the ship self-flying . . . "Fly herself"—somehow Johnny didn't like the words; they kept tangling in his mind with that yarn of Frankenstein. Suppose a ship should turn against her pilot?

"Goofy notion," he murmured, and with a shrug looked out the window again.

Far below the twinkling light of a ranch house showed; a faint glow behind the rudder-fin marked the city of Quesada. The steward dimmed the cabin lights, and the sleeper became a ghost ship swinging through the night,

the whine of wind in her fairing and the low drone from the engines blending in a long-drawn minor chord.

Not a soothing sound, but Johnny was tired. He dozed and dreamed of flying monsters; of fifty-seven leering faces grinning from a black panel-board.

A sharp lurch of the plane waked him. He tried to sit up but he seemed to be wedged against the chair arm, held by a strange thrusting pressure. A deeper chill had crept into the cabin; he noticed the porthole window, opaque, plastered with frozen snow. The wind rose above the rumble of exhaust, a high-pitched metallic whine. Johnny frowned, bewildered; something was pressing him side-wise again. Suddenly he gripped the chair arms. That side-thrust—it was gravity. The sleeper was flying off keel!

An irritable murmur reached him, then the steward's voice, calm, reassuring, and in the shadowy aisle between the berths he saw Phillips swaying toward him. The steward bent down over his chair.

"Caruthers," he whispered, "listen—you're a pilot, aren't you? I heard Reeves say so. Well, there's something wrong up ahead. This plane's off keel. And Quinn and Bryant—they're asleep—I can't wake them——"

His face, blurred by the darkness, frightened Johnny. It recalled the dream of the iron monster. Silly—but it wasn't. A queer dismay swept over him.

"I'll—I'll see what I can do," he answered.

Phillips pressed his arm.

"Quiet," he whispered. "Passengers are awake, and they know this isn't right. One wrong move'll panic 'em."

A man looked out from a curtained berth as the two groped down the aisle. Johnny said apologetically:

"I should have kept my seat until we landed. Hard to keep balance, Steward, when a plane is circling."

The man closed the curtain and Johnny moved on to the door of the control cabin. He halted, his hand on the latch; that queer dismay creeping over him again.

Bryant in the co-pilot's seat, sagged limply against the radio box. On his left, Quinn sat rigidly upright. But he wasn't holding the controls; one hand clenched on the knob of the heat shutter on the wall beside him. Both men's faces had a purplish tinge. All this Johnny glimpsed while a quick second passed—then he glanced at the instrument panel.

The bubble in the turn-and-bank had drifted to the end of the curved glass; the indicator plane of the artificial horizon tilted, thirty degrees off horizontal. Johnny opened the door, reached over the chief pilot's shoulder, grasped the wheel. It moved stiffly against the wind-locked ailerons—but it moved. Slowly the bubble of the turn-and-bank shifted to the neutral mark. Johnny shivered, though the cabin was stifling hot. The breeze from the heat slots scorched his cheek.

"Mr. Quinn!" he cried, gripping the chief pilot's arm. "What's wrong?"

But Quinn did not even groan. The steward was working over Bryant.

"They're unconscious," he muttered. "Hear the radio signal? Doesn't it sound funny?"

He picked up the head set from the floor. Johnny lis-

tened. A strident da-ar dit—da-ar dit issued from the disks. It should have been a buzzing dash, that much Johnny knew.

"The ship's off course," he said.

But Phillips didn't seem to hear. He lifted his hand to his forehead.

"Dizzy—" he muttered—"Dizzy as a top. That paint smell—" he sagged against the door—"it certainly has lasted."

Johnny frowned at the steward. Why, *he* felt dizzy too—and choked, as if a cord were tightening about his throat. Hammers began pounding in his head. Hammers—suddenly he thought of Joe Sciapi driving packing into the gland between the exhaust pipe and the heater drum; the ring of the steel tool, the dull cracked note that had followed the last blow. . . . Dull—and *cracked*. . . . Suddenly the answer came.

He reached out, closing the heat slots on the wall beside the pilots. Four slots, pouring out deadly gas that was leaking into the heater drum from the engine exhaust. Leaking through the hole Sciapi's caulking tool had driven in the steel shell of the siphon . . . The last shutter closed with a rasping click. Johnny unsnapped Quinn's belt.

"Take Bryant," he told the steward. "Lay him on the floor and feed the oxygen. It's carbon monoxide poisoning—"

Phillips stumbled forward. He was game, but the gas worked fast. He dragged Bryant from the seat, then col-

lapsed on the floor beside him. Johnny tried to think, with the hammers in his head pounding ninety to the minute and his thoughts skipping here and there. Fifty-seven gadgets on the panel board—the eyes of a steely monster leering at him in the red reflection of the cowl light. The ship *had* turned against her pilot. . . .

He watched the bubble in the turn-and-bank begin its sidewise drift again. The climb-meter sank to a minus reading; the plane was starting down in a power glide toward the ragged lip of that black bowl of sky.

"Mountains," said Johnny stiffly—"got to see 'em—got to lift her over—" But the snow-crusts glass shut him in like the white walls of a cell.

He tried the catch of the slide window; it was frozen. Johnny drew back, doubling his fist. But there wasn't any punch behind it. He heaved his shoulder into the pane. The safety glass webbed into radiating cracks, but didn't break. Johnny tried the catch again. It gave.



His blows had loosened the ice. Funneling snow screamed in, but the air was clean, and Johnny breathed deeply.

It cleared his head too. He dropped to the pilot's seat. Grasping the wheel, he drew it to him with a gently turning movement; felt the rudder stirrups under his feet. His heart beats dropped to normal; he wasn't afraid.

He began to level off with the turn-and-bank, the Army method of blind flying. He straightened the rudder, felt for lateral direction with the ailerons; last, brought the nose to horizon level by the ball in the little indicator.

This done, Johnny swung round, opened the valve of the oxygen tank and laid the rubber cone beside the chief pilot's head. Then he thrust his shoulders through the window frame.

The slipstream drove snow crystals into his face; blinding tears ran down his cheeks. But he kept watch until the white clouds rocketing under the wing parted. Timbered peaks swung by—and they were close. A minute more of glide and the sleeper would have crashed. Johnny drew back into the cabin. His hands shook as he opened the throttles and set the ship in a careful climb. The beat of the engines lifted. He glanced behind him.

Phillips *was* game, no doubt of that. He had dragged to his knees by the oxygen tank and was swinging the nozzle; first over Quinn, then over the co-pilot. Bryant already showed results; the ghastly purplish tinge had left his face.

"He's coming out," said Phillips. "Mr. Quinn is breathing better too." Then with a frown: "It's three-fifteen; we should have reported Vanlear at two twenty-five. You

know how to work station frequency? The switch is on the panel over the glass."

Pursuit planes—the only ships that Johnny knew—didn't use radio; the ignition damped it out. But he'd been reading up on radio control. He listened. The "N" signal kept fading; that meant the beam neutral was close. On the panel overhead was a knob marked "Station Frequency," and Johnny flipped it over. . . . Static crackled, then a voice came through:

"Quesada to Flight Twelve. . . . Why don't you give position? Why don't you give position, Bryant? . . . Answer at once. . . ."

"Quesada's asking our position," Johnny said. "Any idea where we are?"

The steward shook his head.

"Bryant figured a south detour to miss this storm. . . . We might be in Mexico, or—look!" he cried, pointing at the forward glass.

Johnny looked—and felt a load roll off his shoulders. Snow was melting from the glass, whipping away into the darkness in great frothy chunks. Scattered flakes blew through the open frame beside him, but the air felt almost balmy. The storm had passed.

Phillips was on his feet now, staring through the window. Far distant, almost over the horizon-curve, a finger of light swept through the sky. Below the light a green blinker flashed.

"Vanlear beacon!" cried the steward. "Two greens and a white! You can answer Quesada now. No use mentioning this trouble, just tell 'em Flight Twelve's reporting,

twenty miles southeast of Vanlear, and give your altitude and weather. And say, get the field conditions at Vanlear, if you want to bring her in."

"Bring her in?" repeated Johnny with regret. "Well, it's the safe bet, I suppose."

The microphone lay on the floor beside the bucket-seat. As he stooped to pick it up, he looked into the chief pilot's face. Quinn was staring at him, his expression blank. He muttered something, but the words were incoherent. Johnny lifted the "mike" and spoke:

"Flight Twelve to Quesada. . . . Estimated twenty miles southeast Vanlear. . . . Fourteen thousand feet; high overcast. . . . How's the ceiling at Vanlear? Is it okay to lan——"

The microphone twitched from his grasp, and a hand clutched shakily at his knee. It was the chief pilot's hand, and Quinn was sitting up, though he swayed dizzily. Bryant had begun to cough like a man who is airsick. The chief pilot gave him a glance, then frowned at Johnny.

"No!" he croaked. "No landing at Vanlear! Go through on schedule! Fly her—" his voice cracked—"or your name comes down off the extra board, Caruthers."

Johnny stared. The extra board—his name! Then—though it was the worst thing he could have done if Quinn was anti-Army—he saluted. But the chief pilot didn't seem to mind; in fact, he answered the salute. Grinning at the fifty-seven gadgets on the panel, Johnny snapped the gyro-pilot switch. . . . *Let the ship fly herself*—she knew now who was the master.



## SMART MONEY \*

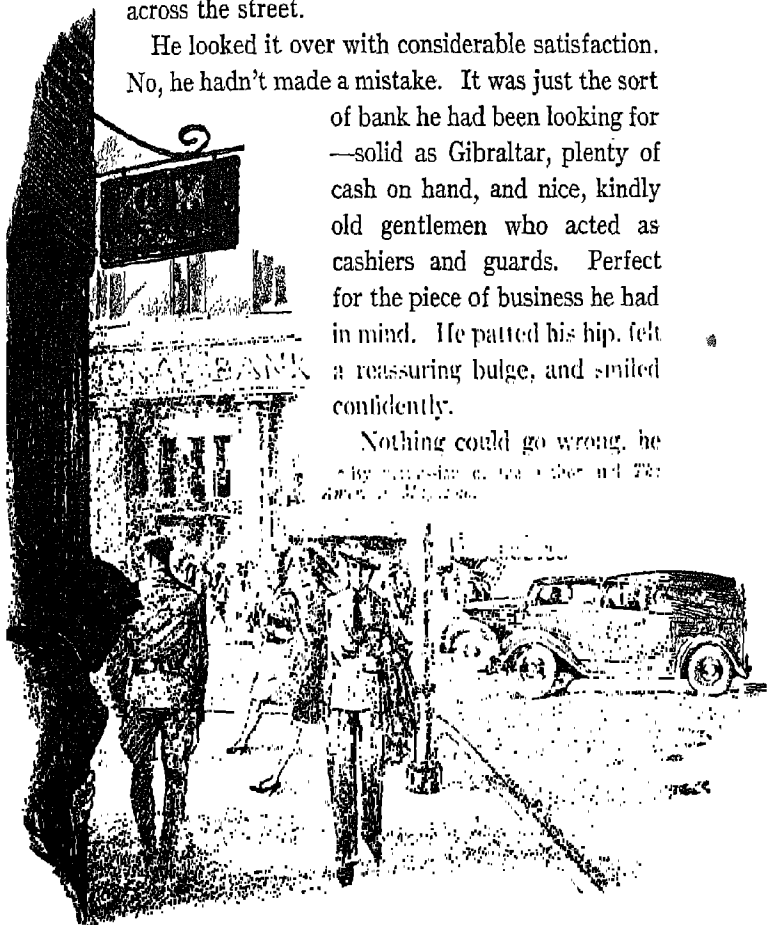
*This story plays a trick on us, but it is  
such a good trick that we don't mind.*

by William H. Birnie

Leaning in a shadow against the granite wall of the building, a trim, square-shouldered figure with a cap pulled down over one eye, he looked at the front of the bank across the street.

He looked it over with considerable satisfaction. No, he hadn't made a mistake. It was just the sort of bank he had been looking for—solid as Gibraltar, plenty of cash on hand, and nice, kindly old gentlemen who acted as cashiers and guards. Perfect for the piece of business he had in mind. He patted his hip, felt a reassuring bulge, and smiled confidently.

Nothing could go wrong, he  
\* by permission of the author and The  
American Magazine.



told himself savagely. There was nothing to worry about. Not a thing. He had planned it all so carefully. He would stroll in casually, glance over the place quickly to get his bearings, and then—down to business, the quicker the better.

He was glad he had decided, in the end, to pull it off by himself. The gang had wanted to come along with him, but he had put his foot down. You couldn't trust them to keep their nerve. Swell fellows, all of them, but they were apt to get the jitters, to say the wrong word right off, and spoil the whole thing. Better pull off the job alone, and then pick them up afterward. They'd be waiting for him, he knew, in the usual hideout.

He watched the pedestrians who were hurrying past him. Funny, he thought, how they'd stop in their tracks if they only knew what he was up to. That girl there, the one with the tip-tilted nose, for example, who didn't even give him a tumble when he grinned at her. What would she do if she knew? Maybe she'd think he was crazy. Probably . . .

But this was no time to be thinking about girls. He needed all his wits for the job ahead of him. Women only got a fellow in trouble, anyhow. He'd seen it happen plenty of times—right in his own gang. He couldn't understand it. He had time enough for all that later, when he had his pile stored away in a good, safe place. And this would give him a start.

Suddenly he glanced at the clock. It was now or never. Another pat on his hip pocket, a hitch in his belt, a deep breath—and he sauntered across the street as noncha-

lantly as he could. He pushed open the door of the bank and looked around.

A guard approached him. "Anything I can do for you?"

Now—easy now . . .

"I'd like to see the president," he said. "If you please."

Which was just the right thing to say—because when a nine-year-old decides to open a bank account with the first three dollars he's ever earned, he is entitled to the very best of service, isn't he?

### THE ROAD TO VAGABONDIA \*

*You won't find Vagabondia on the map. It isn't a place at all,  
but just the road you walk on when you've left your cares and  
your worries behind you, and whistled your dog to follow along.*

by Dana Burnet

He was sitting on the doorstep as I went strolling by;  
A lonely little beggar with a wistful, homesick eye—  
And he wasn't what you'd borrow, and he wasn't what  
you'd steal,  
But I guessed his heart was breaking, so I whistled him to  
heel.

They had stoned him through the city streets, and naught  
the city cared,  
But I was heading outward, and the roads are sweeter  
shared,  
So I took him for a comrade, and I whistled him away—  
On the road to Vagabondia, that lies across the day!

\* From *Poems* by Dana Burnet. By permission of Harper & Brothers, publishers.

Yellow dog he was; but bless you—he was just the chap  
for me!

For I'd rather have an inch of dog than miles of pedigree.  
So we stole away together, on the road that has no end,  
With a new-coined day to fling away and all the stars to  
spend!

Oh, to walk the road at morning, when the wind is blowing  
clean,

And the yellow daisies fling their gold across a world of  
green—

For the wind it heals the heartache, and the sun it dries  
the scars,

On the road to Vagabondia that lies beneath the stars.

'Twas the wonder of our going cast a spell about our feet—  
And we walked because the world was young, because the  
way was sweet;

And we slept in wild-rose meadows by the little wayside  
farms,

Till the Dawn came up the highroad with the dead moon  
in her arms.

Oh, the Dawn it went before us through a shining lane of  
skies,

And the Dream was at our heartstrings, and the Light was  
in our eyes,

And we made no boast of glory and we made no boast of  
birth,

On the road to Vagabondia that lies across the earth!



### BEAR FACTS OF THE CASE \*

He was thrown by a bear right  
over the edge of a cliff,—at  
least, those are the bear facts  
of the case.

by Gerald Averill

Johnny Terril trotted down the sluice boom at Beaver Brook Deadwater, planted his pickpole on a boom log and vaulted easily to the catwalk across the top of the great log structure. On the opposite shore he could see yellow lamp-light in the windows of the driving camp and hear the steady drone of voices from the cook shack.

Frogs shrilled happily in the still evening air and the

\* By permission of the author and *The Open Road for Boys Magazine*.

smell of bruised spruce and wet earth bit pleasantly into Johnny's nostrils. He crossed the dam, the sharp calks of his driving shoes sticking into the tough wood just enough to make him lift his feet high at every step, so that his progress resembled that of a strutting rooster.

Johnny's days of timekeeping were over. On this drive he acted as clerk, with two timekeepers under him and a lot of extra cares and worries. There were three twenty-man wangers on the stream, with other timekeepers for two of them. Johnny had the Depot as his own special charge.

The wanger at the dam being the easiest to handle, a green man had been assigned to do the timekeeping there. Johnny smiled as he thought of meeting the new timekeeper. Six feet tall Clare Means, the new timekeeper, stood in his socks, thin as a rail, with a wide sensitive mouth above which inquiring blue eyes peered wistfully through thick lenses. Add hands and feet three sizes too large for his arms and legs, and you have a good picture.

"Goose" Perry, cook for the camp, swore that the new timekeeper was something invented entirely for the consumption of victuals, and that it took a two-horse team load of grub to slow him up at the table, let alone satisfy him. Flannigan, the foreman, complained bitterly that his crew had no time for the serious business of sluicing timber because they had to stop so often to fish the new timekeeper out of the stream. According to the foreman's mildest statement, Means couldn't get within ten feet of any body of water without falling into it.

In spite of their complaints, the men liked the time-keeper. He was so anxious to please, and so helpless to return their pranks that it was impossible not to think well of him.

Means traveled miles after mythical "cross-hauls," went methodically through three storehouses in search of a "left-handed monkey wrench," and almost but not quite sent in an order to the main office for a gross of post holes. Truly, the lanky lad had a lot to learn, but he could make out a pay roll, cross check it, tie it up with the man meals, horse meals and wangan book with the speed and accuracy of a Certified Public Accountant. Figures to him were child's play, and after the first few weeks Johnny wouldn't have swapped his new man for a farm with a fence around it.

The camp door stood open to the soft spring air, and Johnny, treading lightly, stopped just within the dingle to listen.

Mr. Perry was in his element. He had a good listener, and was making the most of it. The new timekeeper sat at the table in an attitude of strict attention while the cook paced the floor, tenderly eying a mangy bearskin rug spread out at his feet.

The bearskin was a terrible piece of work. The bright green eyes had been poorly placed, and artificial teeth, at least four inches long, gleamed wickedly from brick-red gums. The previous fall, the hotel at Seboomook had been stripped of its ancient furnishings and the cook, seeing a chance of future profit, had saved the skin from a pile of

discarded rugs. The fur, once black and shiny, was now a dingy yellow, and various torn spots had been roughly patched with pieces from an old fox hide.

"Yessir," the cook was saying, "that there skin come out of the Rockies som'ers in 1849. That's a real grizzly pelt and when it was fresh it was about eleven feet long. She's shrunk up now so she's only about half the right size, but I wouldn't sell that hide, not for a thousand dollars. When I think what I went through to get it, well,—" the cook shuddered realistically, and applied a match to his blackened pipe.

The timekeeper rose to the bait like a hungry trout. "Please, Mr. Perry," he begged. "Tell me about it."

"Well, I dunno," grumbled the cook, "it's gettin' pretty late, and Johnny might show up here tonight. I don't tell this story to everyone and if he should come I'll have to stop and finish it some other time."

Means arose hurriedly. "Dear me, Mr. Perry! Are you really expecting Mr. Terril? I must go and pull his canoe out and turn it over. He told me that if I ever left it dragged up on the rocks again, he would jump down my throat and swallow me. I don't think he would really carry out any such threat, but I'm sure he would be very unpleasant about it."

The cook eyed Means scornfully.

"Sit down!" he roared. "You go near that water again tonight and you'll be left there to soak. You've been fished out three times today. Ain't that enough? Besides, I took care of that canoe myself. I ain't scared of Johnny Terril, but I sure don't want him down on me, neither."



Johnny, standing just outside, smothered a chuckle, and relaxed against the wall. This was going to be *good*.

Means folded his gangling length back on the bench again, and the cook began his tale.

"It was back in '49, or else when I was with Lewis and Clark. I don't remember dates so well, but the facts is real plain in my mind. We was crossin' one of them high mountain passes and in some way or other I got separated from the rest of the party. We was all cruisin' different trails, tryin' to find a way out of the country.

"Well, anyways, I was horsebackin' along the side of this mountain on a trail a squir'l couldn't hardly navigate, when I turns a sharp corner and here is this bear edgin' along on his hind legs jest like a man. Boy, it must have been a ten thousand foot drop on my right, and a thousand feet of straight up and down mountain on my left, and me on a horse that didn't have no love for bears!

"There warn't no safe way to get off the horse 'ceptin' goin' back over his tail, but I had no mind to desert the poor beast so I took a chance on slidin' down under his neck and droppin' off. As I did so, my knife flew out of its sheath and went over the brink.

"Well sir, the minute I hit the ground, that bear let out a roar. I heard my horse plunge once and then give a screech as it followed the knife over the edge. My hair riz right up and I knew my time had come, but I ain't the kind that runs from danger and 'twarn't no use to run anyways, so I tore loose a yell like a fightin' bobcat, jumped high and lit aboard that bear 'thout no preliminaries. I got a headlock first grab and whirled and flung



him smack over my shoulder. Unfort'nately one of his big teeth caught in the bosom of my huntin' shirt when he flipped, and took me right along with him.

"Nossir, I couldn't tell for a minute whether I'd throwed the bear, or he'd throwed me. First he'd be on top, then I would, till all at once I realized there was nothin' under us but space. I dunno to this day how far we fell, but nothin' ever dropped as fast as we did. I worked around onto his back, clamped my arms and legs tight and hung on. We went past the horse in about a minute and left him so quick it seemed as if he was hangin' up there on a string!

"Well, about the time I got settled down to ride com-

fortable I see we was headin' right smack down into a little lake. I got sort of paralyzed watchin' it come up at me and all at once there was an awful crackin' great splash, and there we wuz!

"The shock kind of made me dizzy for a minute, and when the fog cleared away, I see that the bear was deader than a pickled mackerel; and after I'd steadied some, I towed him ashore. 'Twarn't till I'd examined him real careful that I realized he was mellered by the force of the blow just like an apple that has been pounded. He'd split open some on the underside and I jest grabbed him by the nose, give a good stout yank, and that there hide slipped off jest as slick as grease. Yessir, that bear was cert'nly meller!"

The timekeeper blinked rapidly and opened and closed his mouth several times before he could regain his powers of speech. "But—but about your horse, Mr. Perry? What became of him?"

"Horse? Oh, my horse. Well now, he hadn't come down yet when I left there the next day. That there horse must have been an awful slow faller!"

Johnny Terril, coming from where he was listening, strode into the room. He eyed the cook coldly and that individual immediately busied himself about the stove.

The timekeeper cleared his throat. "Mr. Perry was just telling me how he came by that bear skin," he offered. "The story was most interesting."

"I'll bet it was," jeered Johnny. "Some day I'll tell you another story about that old skin, and I'll bet you'll be

interested in that one too. It's a good one, you bet."

Mr. Perry flushed a bright red and began to make a lot of unnecessary clatter with the frying pan.

Johnny spent much time with his new timekeeper. The more he saw of him, the better he liked him.

The cook, the foreman and the crew all continued to fill Means full of misinformation, and they finally succeeded in building up in him a real fear of bears. He tried not to admit it even to himself, but he stayed very close to camp after darkness fell and lay awake night after night listening for the roars, grunts and rending of timbers that he had been told would mean a bear raid was coming.

The cook delighted in telling him tales in which numerous acquaintances of his had been dragged screaming from their bunks to be seen no more, and what Mr. Perry couldn't think of the foreman could. There were always plenty of fresh bear tracks down by the spring, and it became a real test of courage for Clare to get a pail of water.

Bears became a horror to him until, at last Johnny, after getting wind of a certain deep dark plot, talked rather seriously with him.

"See here, Means. The men are saying that you are afraid of your shadow. Now this won't do. There's nothing in these woods day or night that will harm a man. You can roll up in a blanket anywhere and, except for possibly a porcupine or a skunk, nothing will disturb you. Snap out of it, and forget about bears. If you should ever happen to stumble on one, let out a whoop and watch the bear get out of sight as quickly as possible.

"Now, tomorrow night about seven o'clock, you go down to the spring after a pail of water. There's a woodpile right handy to it, you remember, and leaning against that pile you will see a brown ash stick just the right size for good handy swinging. I've got a hunch that you may see a bear, and if you do, I want you to put your lantern down and whang that bear smack on the nose. And just as long as you can reach him, keep that stick working. I think the results will prove to you that the bear is a very cowardly animal."

The timekeeper managed a sickly grin. He was scared stiff but he had a great admiration for Johnny. He spoke up bravely. "You're the boss, Mr. Terril. I don't know how far I will get with this thing, but I'll try. You know I really don't believe *all* I hear, and I think, not meaning any harm of course, that Mr. Perry allows a very wonderful imagination to get the best of him at times."

Johnny snorted. "Why, that goose-necked old boiler is the biggest liar north of Moosehead, and that's taking in a lot of territory!"

On the following evening, after darkness had fallen, certain members of the crew began to drift carelessly one by one, in the direction of the spring. A brooding tenseness hung over the vicinity of the camp, while now and then a muffled word or a chuckle sounded from the darkness around the old pulp pile.

Johnny strode whistling through the office door, rattled a tin dipper in the water pail and peevishly complained, "Seems as if there's never any drinking water in this pail,

Means. Go fill it, will you? I've got to get these calks off. The pegs are working through into my feet." Then in a whisper, "Remember what I told you. If I hear any noise I'll come a-runnin'."

The lantern made grotesque shadows of Clare's moving legs as he walked slowly down the fateful path toward the spring. He fancied he heard an ominous crackling in the brush, and his scalp prickled. When he reached the wood-pile he noted the ash sapling leaning against its farther end, and caught the sheen of water at the edge of the lantern light. Shifting the pail to his left hand, he picked up the club. As he passed the end of the stacked wood and set his lantern and pail on the ground, he gasped in dismay. A shadowy object shuffled from the darkness and entered the path between him and the camp! Horrified, Means beheld a bear, rolling and snuffing, its little eyes gleaming wickedly in the lantern glow!

The light flickered in a sudden breeze, and the animal seemed to grow bigger with every step as it advanced. Stark terror shook the timekeeper. The black unknown forest was behind him and this horrible beast before. With a yell of desperation he lifted the ash club aloft and swung wildly.

There came a thud followed by a muffled grunt, and as the second swing caught the bear across the shoulders something burst upon the air that sounded suspiciously like a hearty curse. Bruin, evidently having had enough of this treatment, turned clumsily and tried to make off up the path, but a shrewd stroke on his hinder parts brought forth a roar that contained an unmistakable note of dis-

tress. As he reared up on his hind legs, he received a vicious poke in the midsection that caused him to drop to all fours again with a cry that was almost human in its anguish. Then he charged.

The timekeeper, who by this time was beginning to have real hopes of ultimate victory, cleverly side-stepped and assisted the bear on its way with a swipe across the rear that fairly lifted that section from the ground. In fact, several observers afterward declared hilariously that the animal actually walked three or four steps upon its front feet alone before it dived into the spring!

The water was cold, and very deep. The bear squawked as it submerged, and howled horribly when it arose to receive another thump across the shoulders. That last howl was undoubtedly a human voice, and one acquainted with the raucous tones of Mr. Perry would have been almost certain it had originated in that famous long neck of his.

There was no question as to the owner of the voice when the next stroke landed.

"Let up!" wailed the cook. "Oh my soul! Ouch! It's me, Perry. I'm only——"

*Whack!* The stick fell again and Mr. Perry, losing his hold on the crumbling bank, submerged for the second time. He broke water on the far side of the spring, and lifting his paws, pushed awkwardly at the grinning bear head.

"My heavenly days!" he groaned. "Can't you see it's me? You deef? What you want to half kill me for? I was only playin' a little joke."

The head came loose and flopped back between his shoulders. Rage twisted his features as he eyed the silent timekeeper. "Answer me, you long slab o' cussedness. Didn't you hear me yellin' that it was me?"

Clare Means shifted his big feet uneasily, settled his glasses upon his nose and then and there became a man. "Of course I heard you, Mr. Perry, but you can hardly blame me for not stopping until I had actually *seen* that it was you."

The cook dragged his shivering form forth from the spring.

"Now by the tumblin' walls o' Jericho!" he stuttered. "What do you mean by that? If you heard me, what d'you keep on beltin' me for?"

The timekeeper's voice was meek enough, but the woods rang with shouts and laughter at his answer.

"Well, Mr. Perry, your word, even in times of stress is not sufficient. I hate to have to say it, but you tell so many lies that I just simply couldn't believe it was you!"

## THE EAGLE

by Alfred Tennyson

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ring'd with the azure world he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.



## A TOAST TO THE FLAG

*The American flag is the symbol of the brotherhood of man. It stands for courage, for chivalry, for generosity, and honor. No hand shall touch it roughly, no hand shall touch it irreverently. Its position is afloat; to float over its children, uplifting their eyes and hearts by its glowing colors and splendid promises; for under the Stars and Stripes are opportunities unknown to any other nation in the world.*

by John Daly

Here's to the Red of it!  
There's not a thread of it,  
No, nor a shred of it,  
In all the spread of it  
    From foot to head,  
But heroes bled for it,  
Faced steel and lead for it,  
Precious blood shed for it,  
    Bathing it Red.

Here's to the White of it!  
Thrilled by the sight of it,  
Who knows the right of it,  
But feels the might of it,  
    Through day and night.  
Womanhood's care of it  
Made manhood's dare for it;  
Purity's prayer for it  
    Keeps it so White.

Here's to the Blue of it!  
Heavenly view of it,  
Star-spangled hue of it,  
Honesty's due of it,  
Constant and true.  
Here's to the whole of it,  
Stars, stripes, and pole of it,  
Here's to the Soul of it,  
Red, White, and Blue!

### GO DOWN TO THE CROSSIN' \*

by S. Omar Barker

*This ballad may be sung to the old cowboy tune: "I'm A-Ridin' Ol' Paint."*

Go down to the crossin' and holler to the Boss:  
The river is boomin' too high to git across.  
He better lay back till the water ain't so high,  
The driftwood's a-floatin'—some cowboy will die.  
*Git along yuh little dogies, quit a-switchin' of your tail,  
You're a-headin' for Kansas, the end of the trail!*

I rode to the river a-spurrin' of my hoss,  
An' I told the ol' Ramrod he couldn't git across.  
He looked at the water, the water looked at him,  
An' he says: "Boys, no river is too deep to swim!"  
*Git along yuh little dogies, git along acrost the crick,  
You're a-gittin' for Kansas an' a-gittin' there quick!*

\* By permission of the author.

We stripped off our clothes to the bare naked skin,  
Pushed on to the river an' shoved the herd in.  
They snuffed an' they snorted, they tried to turn back,  
Till the leaders plunged in an' we took up the slack.

*Git along yuh little dogies, you got to swim or drown;  
Leave Texas behind you, you're a-goin' to town!*

Go down to the river an' holler to the Boss:  
They've started to millin', they'll never git across.  
Oh, yonder goes Shorty to straighten out the mill,  
An' close in behind him comes Buttermilk Bill!

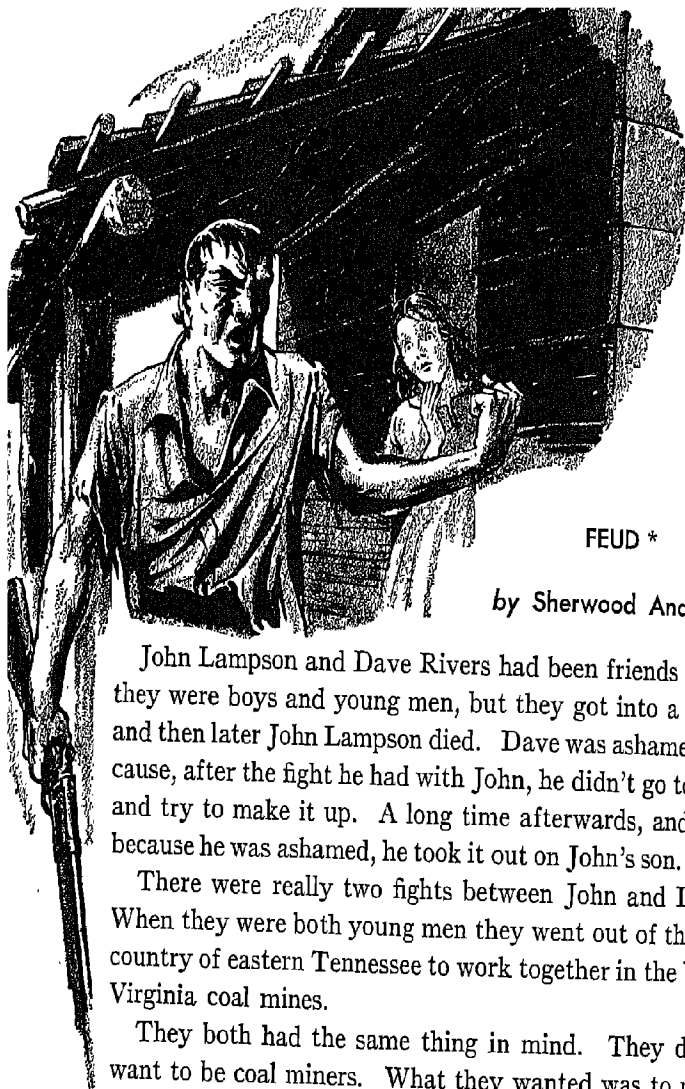
*Git along yuh little dogies, the river's boomin' high,  
If a driftin' log hits him some cowboy will die!*

I looked at the river, I heard a man groan—  
It's Shorty gone under, he'll sink like a stone!  
A drift-log has struck him, but younder comes the Boss,  
A-swimmin' out to him upon his black hoss!

*Git along yuh little dogies, the Ramrod he's too old,  
To swim such a river, the water's too cold!*

Go down to the crossin' an' see a pile of stones,  
That marks the last rest of the Trail Boss's bones.  
No epitaph's wrote there, but trail men understand:  
He died in the water, a-savin' a hand.

*Git along yuh little dogies, the river's done crossed!  
You're headed for Kansas—but yuh ain't worth the cost!*



## FEUD \*

by Sherwood Anderson

John Lampson and Dave Rivers had been friends when they were boys and young men, but they got into a fight, and then later John Lampson died. Dave was ashamed because, after the fight he had with John, he didn't go to him and try to make it up. A long time afterwards, and just because he was ashamed, he took it out on John's son.

There were really two fights between John and Dave. When they were both young men they went out of the hill country of eastern Tennessee to work together in the West Virginia coal mines.

They both had the same thing in mind. They didn't want to be coal miners. What they wanted was to make enough money in the mines to come back into the hills and buy farms. A good many hillmen do that. When they

\* By permission of the author and *The American Magazine*.

are young they go off to the mines or to a factory town. They work hard and save money, and then they come back. A hillman is a hillman. He doesn't want to live his life away from the hills.

You may know how miners work. Two men work together in a little room far down under the ground. It is dangerous work, and a man must have faith in his partner. Any little slip, a moment of carelessness on the part of one man, and both he and his partner may be killed.

So there are these friendships that spring up between miners. "Here I am, working with you, day after day. I am going around with your life held in the hollow of my hand." Such an experience makes two men feel close. Dave and John, both powerful men and both unmarried, had such a friendship.

And then John and Dave fought. They fought over a woman they met in a West Virginia town, and I don't know much of that side of their story. They fought once underground and once on the main street of a mining town. As it happened, the woman married another miner and left the town in which they were working.

They fought twice, and Dave Rivers won both fights, and then they quit working together, but both stayed on in the same town.

I think later that when both men got home to the hills and each man got his own little farm in the same neighborhood and married—it happened that they married second cousins—I think that both men wanted to make it up but that neither man would make the first move. "He began

it," Dave Rivers said to himself. "Well, he licked me," John Lampson said. The result was a growing resentment. The two wives kept at them but both men were stubborn . . .

But this story is not concerned primarily with the two men. It concerns John Lampson's son, Jim Lampson, and Dave Rivers' daughter, Elvira.

In the hill country girls often get married at sixteen, and at that age young men push out into the world. Jim Lampson is a sensitive, rather slender man and he began paying court to Dave's daughter, Elvira.

It happens that I know about the courtship, for two reasons. I am fond of taking long walks alone in the hills, and one night I saw the two walking together hand in hand on a mountain road. And then young Jim sometimes talks to me. He is ambitious. He wants an education, and sometimes comes to me to borrow books. It was young Jim who told me what had happened between himself and Dave Rivers. His voice shook when he told me the story.

Jim is in love with Elvira and he got bold. It was Sunday, and he went to Dave Rivers' house, and there was Dave all dressed up and sitting on the porch.

"What do you want?" Dave asked gruffly, addressing young Jim.

Jim said that Dave didn't even let him come into the yard. He stood at the gate. It has been only a year since Jim's father died. A wild colt he was trying to break bolted with him.

Young Jim stood in the road and told Dave Rivers that

he wanted to come into the house and call on his daughter Elvira, and Elvira, a slim, lovely mountain girl, was standing in the house doorway back of her father. She stood listening. Dave got suddenly furious. He was, I am pretty sure now, really furious that he hadn't made it up with Jim's father before his old coal-mining partner got killed. He was furious at himself, and he took it out on young Jim.

He began to rave and swear at Jim. Then he ran into the house and got his gun. He waved it about and kept on cursing: "You get out of here! You are the son of that skunk. You get out of here!"

It was all very absurd. I am sure that Dave Rivers' gun wasn't loaded.

But when he talked to me young Jim was furious. Jim isn't one of the noisy sort. That day, after standing for a moment in the road and listening to Dave Rivers curse him and his father, Jim went white and, turning, walked trembling away.

This happened late of a Sunday afternoon in the fall, and it also happened that on that same evening I went for a walk. It might have been ten at night, and there was a moon. I went along up hill and down. It was a fine night. I was listening to the night sounds, getting the night smell. Dave Rivers' house is just at the foot of a sharp hill and there is a wood above the house along the road. The edge of the wood is not more than a hundred yards from the house. Dave was sitting in the open doorway.

I moved into the wood by the fence and stood thinking of what Jim Lampson had told me that afternoon. "I'll go

down and talk to him," I thought. I do not know Dave Rivers as I do young Jim, but Dave had said things about Jim's father I know he couldn't mean, and I had said so to young Jim. I had tried to quiet Jim.

"I'll go talk to Dave Rivers tomorrow," I had said to Jim; but, "I had better do it right now," I told myself as I stood that night outside the house. I hesitated. There was a lamp burning in the room at Dave Rivers' back. The man was sitting, enjoying the night. Was he thinking of what he had done to young Jim's father and of what he had on that day done to young Jim?

I stood hesitant. There is a man's natural inclination not to interfere in other men's quarrels. "I'm going to do it," I said to myself, and then it was too late. It may be that I heard a little sound or that some instinct told me to turn my head.

In the road, twenty feet away, was young Jim, who had come silently up, and he had a gun in his hands and it was aimed at Dave Rivers. Dave was a fair target, down there in the light from the lamp.

It was a thing to give you the shivers down to your toes. Why I didn't shout or run to young Jim I don't know. I stood frozen and silent. Of what does a man think at such moments? Did I see all that was about to happen—Dave Rivers shot by young Jim—my own position, a witness—Jim, a boy I liked—myself running afterwards to report it all to the sheriff? And then later the trial in the courtroom in town—my words sending young Jim to his death on the gallows.



But, thank heaven, it did not happen. Young Jim stood like that, his hand on the trigger of his gun, myself hidden from sight in the shadow of a tree, Dave Rivers sitting down there, smoking his pipe and unaware of it all; and then young Jim lowered his gun. After standing for a moment he turned and walked away . . .

And so that happened, and you can see how I felt. "I'll go down to Dave Rivers and talk to him now," I told myself.

"No, I won't do that. I'll go back up the road to young Jim."

Jim lives with his mother on a farm three miles back in the hills. He is his mother's only child, but Dave Rivers has the daughter Elvira and two younger sons.

And so I stood in the road, hesitating again, and, as is usual with me, again I did nothing. "Tomorrow," I said to myself. I went on home, but I did not sleep, and on the next day I went to Dave's house.

I went to the house in the late afternoon of a fall day, and there was Dave at work in the barnyard back of the house.

It was the time for the fall pig-killing, and Dave was at it alone.

It had turned cold during the night and there was the promise of snow in the air. There was a creek near the barn, and along it red sumac grew. Dave's wife, his daughter Elvira, and the two younger children were standing and watching. Dave looked up and grunted at me.

There was a fire still blazing under a kettle but Dave

had the hog in the scalding barrel filled with the boiling water. I remember the hill beyond where Dave stood, the fall colors of the trees, the bare black trunks of trees beginning to show through, the two children dancing about. And Elvira, and her slim girlishness.

"It will snow before the day is over," I thought.

How was I to begin on Dave? What would he think of my trying to interfere in one of his quarrels? Dave is a gruff one. He isn't easy to handle.

"Hello," he said, looking up and growling at me. He had the hog by the legs and was turning it about in the barrel of hot water. A hog, when ready for killing, is heavy . . .

And then . . . it happened again.

Young Jim came from among the sumac bushes with his



gun in his hand. He had come up along the creek, beyond the barn, and he walked directly to Dave. His face was white. He had made up his mind to kill Dave openly there in the daytime.

He went directly to Dave, and Dave stood for a moment, staring at him. I saw Elvira put her two hands over her eyes, and a little cry came from her lips. The wife ran toward Dave. Jim brought the gun to his shoulder.

"Now! *Now!*" I said to myself. It was a kind of inner cry. I did not speak. The hands of Death were gripping my throat.

But Death didn't get Dave. I saw his big shoulders heave and, with a quick movement of his arms, he had the hog out of the barrel, but in doing so he fell. He and the hog were in a sprawling heap on the ground.

So there he was. In falling he had upset the barrel of boiling water, and it came flooding over his body. He was on the ground, writhing in pain.

All of this had happened more quickly than thought. The wife had been running toward her husband. She was still running. I saw Elvira take her hands from her eyes. Young Jim had thrown his gun to one side and had got his knife out of his pocket. I still stood helpless.

"No, no," I said to myself. For just a moment I thought, "He is going to kill the man with the knife," but in the next moment I saw my mistake.

Jim was on his knees beside Dave and was working furiously. He was cutting Dave's clothes away, and Dave, who had been rolling on the ground and crying with pain,

was now very quiet. I saw his eyes as they were watching the boy.

And so Dave let the boy handle him like a child, and when we had got him into the house I rode Dave's horse off to town for a doctor. I yelled with delight. I was beating the horse over the flanks with my hat. I had seen the look in Dave's eyes as he lay on the ground, letting young Jim cut his clothing away, and I knew that the feud, that had begun between Dave and Jim's father and that Jim had taken up in his turn, was over at last.

## MATCHES

by F. H.

I have a box of matches, and they go  
To light a fire for warmth, a pipe for peace,  
A lamp for guidance, or the candle's glow  
For friendliness when daylight labors cease;

Or one may come to nothing—break in two,  
Or in the ashes shed its scarlet crown;  
Or scorch your fingers, burn the carpet through,  
Or lay a rick in ruins, or a town.

So they are spent, and vanish one by one,  
Brief altar-flames to happiness or strife;  
What shall I do when all of them are gone?  
The matches are my years, the box my life.

## OLD IRONFACE \*

*As the love of a master for his dog, or the love of an owner for his horse, so is the love of a captain for his ship.*

by Albert Richard Wetjen

"Williams," said the port captain, "I want you to pack and get over to Pier 37. You're going senior second mate of the 'Prince Harry.'"

I had to swallow for a moment before I could answer him. The "Prince Harry" was the Line's newest and biggest, due out on her maiden voyage, and almost every officer who thought he had a chance had been pulling strings to get on her. I hadn't. I didn't like liners, and anyway I knew I hadn't a chance. So I was surprised.

"I appreciate it," I said, a bit dazed. "But how did I manage to get the berth?"

"You wouldn't have," he said kindly. "You're not what we consider liner material, and you've been doing very well as mate of the 'Bradwin.'" The "Bradwin" was one of the Line's worst freighters, where they usually dumped fellows like me. "But," added the port captain, "Captain Guthrie always insists on his senior officers' having had sail training. One of his peculiarities. You happen to be the only man we could get." I took that standing.



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"But I thought Captain Maloney was taking the 'Prince Harry,'" I said curiously. "Old Ironface . . . Captain Guthrie, that is . . . was supposed to retire." The port captain looked a little weary, as if he'd explained the business many times before, which he probably had.

"He has—he had, rather. But he's talked the Line into letting him make this first run with the new ship. She's a cinch for the Blue Ribbon, barring accidents, and Guthrie's been trying for it long enough. Besides, the publicity department thought it would be a good stunt. Guthrie commanded the 'Euripides,' the Line's first ship. And now he commands the last. Neat, eh? Maloney's going as executive officer. You be aboard by noon." And he bent over some papers.

"Is the berth permanent?" I wanted to know, and he answered without looking up, "No. Maloney'll throw you out as soon as he's top man. But you'll probably get command of the 'Bradwin' when you come back. I told you you weren't liner material."

"Maybe it's just as well," I said and left. I didn't like liners. I'd rather be mate of a free-and-easy ship like the "Bradwin" than hold down a brassbound watch on a glorified ferry, even if it did pay more and the grub was better. Just a matter of opinion. It's what comes of knocking around in sail and then in tramps for years, I suppose. You have to be respectable and talk politely on crack passenger packets. But what was worse this time was I didn't want to serve under Guthrie, or Old Ironface as he was called. He wasn't a human being. He was a monument. And he was hard on officers. But I had my orders,

so I went down to Pier 37. The "Bradwin" was only a few piers away, and I didn't bother to change my uniform.

Maloney looked me up and down when I reported, and twisted his mouth as if he tasted something bad.

"Are you the best the office could do?" he asked unpleasantly. "Well, it's only for the run. But you'd better get that uniform cleaned and pressed. You've got tramp ship sticking out all over. And rip off one of those gold bands. You're only second mate here. Come on!"

He was one of those big, pink-faced men who are always smiling and jovial, but at the moment he was pretty sour. I don't suppose you could blame him. He'd been master of the "Prince Albert," another of the Line's cracks, and had been groomed for the "Prince Harry." And here at the last minute the Line's senior skipper, who was supposed to retire, had stepped over him. Maloney took me up on the bridge and introduced me.

Old Ironface was pacing up and down, his hands clasped behind him and a cigar going, while in an easy chair sat a little bony man with a squeaky voice and a bald head whom I recognized as Mr. Norman, the president of the Line. He was making the maiden voyage with us, together with half the board of directors, and he looked unhappy and a little afraid. Almost everyone was around Old Ironface, who stopped and stared at me.

He was a big, square-built man with a cleanshaven red face and hair of a silvery white, and he impressed you much as you might be impressed by Gibraltar or the Great Pyramid. You simply couldn't imagine anything really disturbing him, and when you knew his record you thought

about him that way. He had a mouth like a shark's and his eyes were a very pale, cold blue that bored right through you, freezing up any stray thoughts that might be wandering around in your head. I've seen some very angry sailors back away and wilt when Old Ironface looked at them. And if that didn't do it the dry, harsh, methodical snap of his voice did.

"I had a note from the office about you, Williams," he rasped. "You've been in sail?"

"Five years, sir," I told him, and he nodded and looked for a moment at the framed picture of a full-rigged ship hanging over his desk. It was the "Euripides," the first packet the Line had owned and the first he'd commanded. "Nothing like sail to train a man," he said. "Your face seems familiar." I'd made one voyage as junior fourth mate with him, when he'd had the "Prince Consort," but he didn't remember and I didn't remind him. He'd had me fired for fighting with a drunken stevedore. "Well, that'll do," he said, and then as we moved to go Maloney remembered something and turned back.

"Mr. Tremlett, sir, the senior first mate. He wants permission to go ashore for an hour before we sail, to see his wife."

"Hasn't he any work to do?" inquired Old Ironface, biting on his cigar. Maloney shrugged.

"Naturally. I told him he couldn't be spared. But she . . . his wife's having her first baby and he thought he'd drop over to the hospital. I told him the thing was out of the question."

"Then why bother me with it?" snapped Old Ironface



and resumed his walking up and down. Maloney said something unpleasant under his breath and we went out, and I heard Mr. Norman's squeaky voice saying hesitantly, "That's a bit rough on the first mate, isn't it? We don't sail for six hours yet."

"Any man who goes to sea is a fool to marry," rasped the skipper. "There's no place for sentiment on board ship, sir!" The same Old Ironface.

He was an icy old man, and he had no nerves, nor much of any other sort of feeling that anyone had been able to discover, except his craving to hook the Blue Ribbon; and I think that, at the bottom, was more because he hated to fail in anything. He'd always dominated, always won, always come through, grim and hard and unmoved.

But I suppose in a way it was understandable. He'd had a tough life, and two or three personal tragedies hadn't helped it. Picked up as a boy at sea, and from an open boat (sole survivor of the wreck of the "Harridan"), he'd been battered about from ship to ship and port to port until he suddenly emerged with the full-rigger "Euripides" (the same I've mentioned before), bringing her into Fuchow after an ungodly long run from London. That doesn't sound impressive, I know, until you remember he was not yet twenty at the time, had been only acting third mate of the ship until the plague had carried off the rest of the officers and some of the crew, and he'd been left very abruptly in mid-ocean with a mutiny on his hands and only two little apprentice boys to help him handle it. They say his hair was already turning white when he got the ship in.

After that he pretty nearly became a legend. His saving of the bark "Sherwood" is still a classic in the books on seamanship, and I remembered when I was an apprentice myself his rescue of the "Fortuna's" passengers was a thrilling story along the water fronts. There were a lot of other such stories scattered through the years, which I've mainly forgotten, for Old Ironface was one of those seamen who are always bumping into ugly or dramatic situations. He carried them all off too, some by sheer courage, some by sheer skill, some by unbelievable luck. All, in fact, save the one where he'd lost his wife and eldest son in the fire that destroyed the "Canton Lady," when he'd been standing by on another ship, powerless to aid because of the hurricane that was blowing. After that, whatever softness might have remained in him simply dried up, I suppose. He didn't want sympathy. He wasn't used to it. He never referred to the incident again, and they told me his only comment when it was over was, "We all have to take our chance at sea. Get back on the course!"

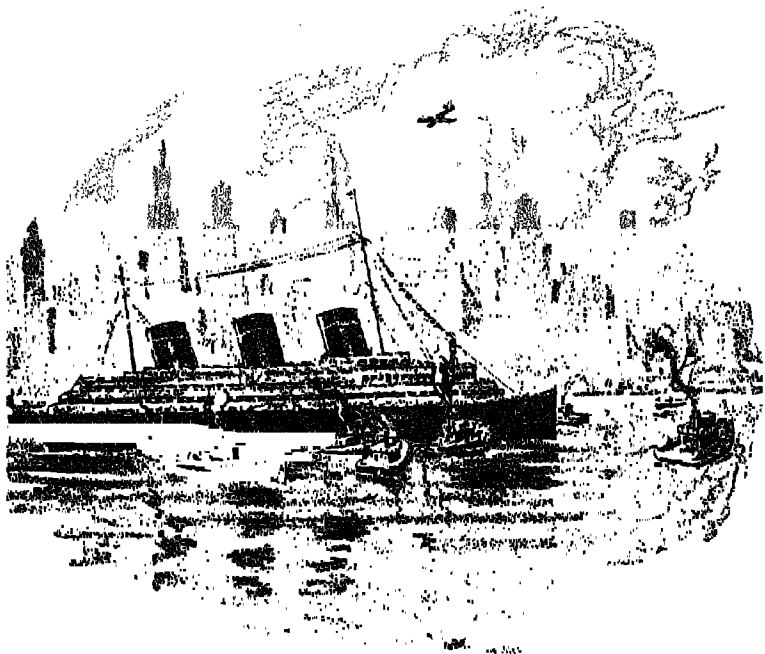
Well, we got away at last, with flags flying and sirens opened up. Twenty thousand people on the piers to see us off, guns firing, bands playing and a whole fleet of tugs to shuffle us around and out into the channel. It was practically a national event. The biggest and best going out to smash the record, and every cabin on board choked with big names.

"It ought to mean something to Old Ironface," one of the cadets remarked to me as we stood aft while she cleared. "But it probably doesn't."

"No, it probably doesn't," I agreed. "He's got no feelings."

But it struck me just the same that even a stone wall might be moved a little. Going out on the last run after a lifetime at sea, after fifty years of command. Fifty years from the full-rigger "Euripides" to the giant "Prince Harry." And a nice half-pay check at the end of the passage, so he could loaf around for the rest of the years and stop waking up in sweats at night wondering if everything was well. Not that Old Ironface ever would have done that. Probably never woke up in a sweat in his life.

He was standing in the port wing, steady as a rock, when I got on the bridge again. He had his great, veined hands stuck in his side pockets, his uniform cap jammed low over his eyes, and they were looking bleakly ahead.



He didn't seem to notice the escort of destroyers that was to stay with us until dawn, nor did he pay any attention to the ships we passed when they opened their sirens and dipped their ensigns. It was just another voyage to him, and he had the Blue Ribbon safely tucked away. We could hardly miss it at thirty knots, and the weather reported all clear ahead. I went over to where Maloney was standing with one of the pilots, and he looked like an angry man. He was saying, "He knows he's only taking her out as an act of courtesy, and because the advertising'll help the Line, but he talks to me as if I were a deck boy half the time."

"It's his last fling," soothed the pilot. "What do you care? She's yours as soon as his foot's off her again."

"He's had every new ship the Line ever launched. He's had half a dozen cracks at the record without luck. You'd think he'd be satisfied."

I didn't blame Maloney much at that. Old Ironface had had the chances all right, and had been nosed out by one thing or another: a faster boat launched about the same time, accidents to the engines, bad weather and so forth. He might have let Maloney land the honor of the Blue Ribbon. But the thing seemed to have become all-important to Old Ironface. It was the only thing he'd aimed for he hadn't hit. Maybe he'd heard the new name for him that was running along the water fronts, "Blue-Ribbon Guthrie," and it had got under his skin. If anything ever could get under his skin.

"I complained about it," Maloney was going on. "But

the officers of the Line talked about him being an old man and all washed up and that we should be kind. It makes me sick!"

Now it so happened that as Maloney spoke there was a brief lull of quiet on the bridge, and the words, "an old man and all washed up and that we should be kind," came clear, before the roar of the siren blotted things out again. Maloney looked quickly around and bit his lip. I stared at Old Ironface's uncompromising back, and it never twitched, though he must have caught the words and known they were meant for him. He turned slowly after a while, and his pale, cold eyes swept the bridge without expression, taking in all the curious faces of assorted cadets, quartermasters and officers standing about and staring at him, sort of strained. He said never a word but everyone instantly became occupied with something close at hand. Old Ironface walked over to look at the compass and get a log reading, and I ducked into the chartroom out of the way. It looked like a pleasant run.

Well, things drifted along into routine, as they always do, except that we had the usual tension that always hangs over a maiden voyage, more intense this time because of the record we were going to lift. Mr. Norman, the president of the Line, gave a dinner for Old Ironface where a lot of speeches were made. There was a special luncheon given by the directors, a special tea by the first-class ladies, another special luncheon, another special tea. Everything was special and Old Ironface was the pet.

"It doesn't make sense somehow," said the navigating

officer. "Him easing out so peaceful with a bunch of souvenirs tucked under his arm. Not after what he's done and been."

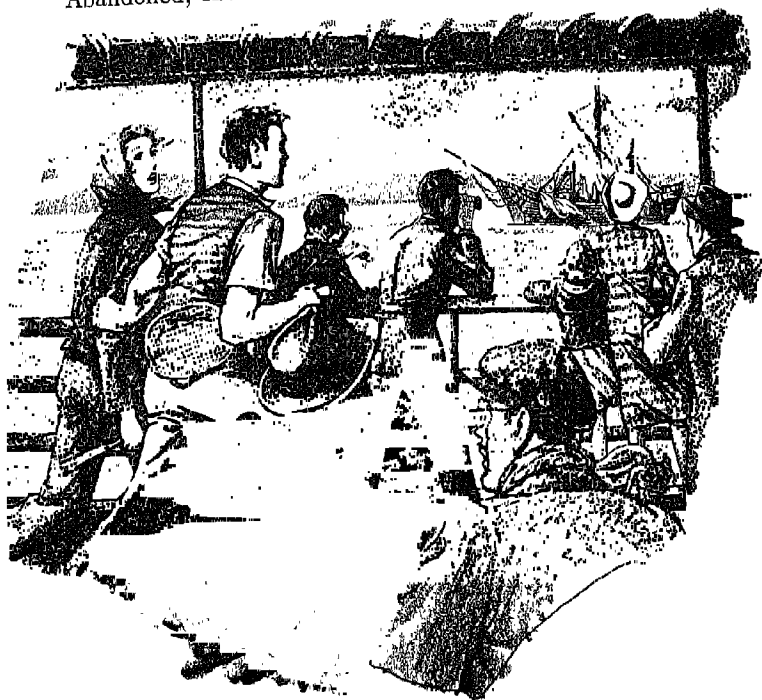
And we all felt a little that way about it, even if we didn't like him much. There was something curiously wrong about seeing a man like him just step ashore, put away his uniform and settle down in an armchair. Something ought to happen. We felt as if we ought to get an urgent SOS, or have something spectacular occur to make the windup complete. There was something pitiful about a finish with only the Blue Ribbon at stake. Winning that called for no heroic effort, no feat of seamanship or daring. It was simply a matter of engine power and reasonable luck. It was something, of course; something to give a little lift to the finish. But it wasn't Old Ironface. With all the sea had done to him, and for him, it seemed only common justice it might make just one last effort, a parting salute to a sailor. And sure enough, it did! We found a derelict.

It happened early in the afternoon about a day and a half from port, and during my watch. The "Prince Harry" was smashing along through a greasy swell and under a cloud-shredded sky, with the wind rising a little and the smell of rain in the air; and we had the Blue Ribbon as good as snapping at the masthead. The ship was asleep, as ships usually are about that time, the passengers lolling around or taking a nap before tea, and the watch on deck barely going through the motions of working. And then the crow's-nest phoned down a report, and soon

after I picked up the derelict through the glasses and sent a quartermaster down to call Old Ironface to the bridge.

She wasn't much of a ship, this derelict, when we came up to her. Just a battered-looking old windjammer, a barkentine from what was left of her spars. She was rolling low in the water, gear trailing alongside, and the falls of her two boats were overhauled and dragging empty. She'd apparently had some tough going, for part of her bulwarks were missing and her midship house was badly smashed and listing a little. A few rags of canvas still whipped here and there, and there was no sign of life. Her name, in white letters round her stern, was "Pride of Haarlem."

"Abandoned, eh?" said Maloney, coming up with Old



Ironface. I tried the siren once more but the derelict's decks remained blank. The skipper took the glasses from me without comment and stared through them. We were already under slow engine, and easing abeam, and the passengers were noisily milling about on the promenades and excitedly lining the rails. It was a little queer, when you came to think of it, the giant "Prince Harry" and that battered, sad wreck from another day. You might make a hundred crossings and never sight a windjammer, and it was a curious thing that we should do so.

"Well, she's in the main steamer lane," said Maloney. "We better just report her and let the Coast Guard take over."

Old Ironface said nothing for a long time, the glasses still at his eyes, and then he rasped, "Stop her! Mr. Williams, take a boat and investigate."

I stopped the "Prince Harry" automatically and we drifted about two cable lengths abeam of the derelict, but I didn't quite believe what I'd heard about investigating. The wreck was obviously abandoned, and we were in a hurry, and anyway the coast guard would look after her.

"You want me to look her over, sir?" I said, surprised, and when he nodded, the glasses still at his eyes, I looked at Maloney, who shrugged and then nodded too. So I dug up the bosun and a few men and we dropped one of our power launches. It wasn't any trouble to get aboard the wreck with all that gear trailing overside, and I got on deck and together with the bosun made a quick in-



spection. She hadn't been abandoned long, for there was food in the galley still unspoiled.

Apparently she'd had a bad battering in some gale, then caught on fire. There was considerable water in her, but her hull seemed sound. I guessed they hadn't been able to put the fire out, and got scared and left her in a hurry; and then probably the fire just died of its own accord or the rain squalls blotted it. She was carrying cased goods and lumber; her storeroom was dry and was well-stocked, and when I tried her fresh-water pump the stuff came up sweet, so evidently her tank wasn't damaged. I couldn't find her log or papers, and her chronometers were gone. I semaphored this information back and wanted to know if I should open her sea cocks. And to my surprise the answer was "No." When I got back on the "Prince Harry" everyone looked



funny. Maloney looked at me and his face was quite pale.

"Captain Guthrie wants you to report in his room, Mr. Williams," he said. And he added in a whisper, "He's gone mad. He's going to take her in." He stared across the greasy swells to where the "Pride of Haarlem" lay.

Old Ironface was throwing some things into a bag when I found him. He wasn't moving fast, just as calmly and as methodically as ever, but Mr. Norman, the president of the Line, was all but screaming:

"You can't do this to us, Captain! The record! You've always wanted the record. And the publicity's all planned. A big reception for you. The Line will be ruined!"

Old Ironface did not answer him but looked at me, and I was wide-eyed.

"She's in good condition?" he rasped. I answered him mechanically and he nodded.

"I'll need about ten men. You might see who you can find that will volunteer," he said.

"But you're not serious, sir," I managed. "You can't leave the 'Prince Harry.' It . . . it. . . ." I had to stop. What was there to be said? Master mariners don't quit their ships on the high seas, save in the most extraordinary circumstances. If Old Ironface wanted the wreck taken in why didn't he order someone else to do it?

"I'll need a good officer," said Old Ironface. He looked at me hard and I heard myself saying, "Yes, sir. I'll be glad to go," without quite knowing just what was happening. Maloney came in, a very worried man.

"Look here, sir, this is a lot of nonsense," he started heatedly. "You're making a spectacle of yourself."

"I've served the Line fifty-odd years," said Old Ironface, going on with his packing, "I've never made a spectacle of myself before. Perhaps it's time I did." He straightened and looked at Maloney. "I'm an old man and all washed up. Does it matter so much?"

"You're holding up the ship, sir," was all Maloney could say.

"You'd better take over!" Mr. Norman shouted squeakily. "Maloney, I order you to take over and stop this nonsense. Captain Guthrie is discharged." I had to laugh at that. You can't discharge a master on the high seas. Maloney bit his lip. He was in a spot and I felt sorry for him.

"There's nothing I can do, sir," he told the president. "Unless the surgeon declares Captain Guthrie is insane. And I doubt . . ." He did not finish. Old Ironface saw me still standing around and gaping and he snapped, "Ten men, I said! What are you waiting for?" I left very quietly. And as I did I heard him add, "You'll get your command the sooner, Maloney. What do you care?"

I ran into the navigating officer on my way to the main deck. He was as shaken as the rest of us.

"What do you suppose has gotten into him?" he said. "Or is he really mad?"

"I don't know," I told him. "How should I? From what I gather, that crack of Maloney's about his being an old man got under his skin, and he's going to show us. I never knew he cared about things before."

"But he was so set on the Blue Ribbon," protested the navigating officer. "Everyone knows that. The one last

thing he wanted. Now he's chucking it all away to work home a lousy wreck. There'll be an inquiry over this."

"What does he care?" I said wearily. "He's retiring anyway. Maybe it's just that he wants to go out in a blaze. Anyway, I'm crazy too. I've got to find ten men."

I won't detail the rest of it. There was a lot of bad language, a lot of excitement, and it was all like a dream. Old Ironface stared them all down and went ahead. We took him over to the "Pride of Haarlem" with his volunteers in the power launch. One of our lifeboats, which we were to hoist aboard the barkentine since her own boats were all gone, followed. Then Old Ironface kept the "Prince Harry" waiting, mails and record and all; kept that giant white hull swinging to the greasy sea obedient upon him while he checked the "Pride of Haarlem," made a list of the things he needed and sent the power launch back to bring them. That done he signaled he was finished. The "Prince Harry" sounded her siren three times, began to move, picked up speed, and then raced off and into the horizon. She would still have the record if her luck held. I looked at the bosun, who had come with us, and I sat down on a bitt.

"This didn't happen," I croaked. "It couldn't. You don't do things like this."

The bosun shook his head, dazed as I was. It had all happened so fast there hadn't been time to think much. I looked at Old Ironface, standing straight and square by the for'ard taffrail, his great veined hands resting on the teak and his hard face turned as he looked first aloft at

the shattered spars, and then along the worn decks. I don't know what he was thinking. What could he be thinking? He'd thrown away the Blue Ribbon he'd been set on; shattered every precedent; left his own ship on the high seas; deliberately stepped down from command of the newest and biggest to be master of a sea-swept, fire-gutted wreck in the middle of a desolate sea.

He turned and looked at us after a while. We were all grouped on the poop, talking in low voices. And then he walked to the main cabin skylight and unbuttoned his uniform jacket. He took it off, folded it carefully and laid it down by the skylight—that jacket with the four gold bands on the sleeves and the twin rows of medal ribbons across the left breast. He laid it down, and he laid his uniform cap on top of it, so the golden oak leaves of rank gleamed dully in the afternoon sun. And then he rolled up his sleeves while the wind tossed his silvery hair, and the knotty muscles of his old arms twisted beneath the heavy blue of his tattooing. He looked at me.

"I'm glad you came, Williams," he said quietly, very quietly for him. "You seem a good man even if you're not, as the port captain insisted, liner material." A ghost of a smile twitched his shark's mouth. "Maybe I'm not either."

Then he looked over the men and his face hardened. And when he spoke again his voice was lifted. It occurred to me with a shock that I'd never heard his voice lifted before. He'd never *had* to lift it on an immaculate, glass-enclosed bridge, where a clutter of officers and quarter-

masters hastened to relay his slightest whisper. But it was different now, on the tossing deck of the "Pride of Haarlem," with the wind whining in the rigging, the sea slapping alongside, and the little stormy petrels skimming about.

"We'll get to work," he said. And then, as the men just stood staring stupidly at him for a moment, his voice rose and blasted, shook with a timbre none of us had heard. "I said we'll get to work! Now, jump, blast you!" And they jumped.

If everything that had already happened had been insane, then what followed was completely and doubly mad. We got out a sea anchor of sorts so she lifted to the swells instead of wallowing in the trough. We cut her trailing gear adrift, shifted the midship house back into line,—patched up the bulwarks for the time being. There was a donkey boiler midships, and we cleaned it out and got steam up, and set a portable pump to work. We got the hatches on, or spiked planks over the openings, once we were certain the hull was sound. And we did a good deal more before it became too dark.

"It looks like we're going to have a little weather," I observed to Old Ironface, as we sat in the main cabin eating biscuits and canned beef by the light of a hurricane lamp. "But I guess we can ride it all right. They'll have reported us to the Coast Guard and there should be a cutter out to pick us up. We've only to stick around."

He looked at me for a long moment, his pale, blue eyes very frosty and narrowed a little.

"We're not going to stick around," he said. "I don't care to be picked up in this condition."

"This condition?" I managed. "But surely . . ."

"We'll get some canvas on her and run south a little," he said. "Out of the way. We don't want to be found just yet. The ship . . ." He didn't finish. I started to say something, to argue, but he looked at me again and I shut up. It didn't make sense though. What did we want to go lose ourselves for? The Coast Guard would certainly locate us and pick us up if we stuck where we were or kept to the steamer lane. But he wanted to go south.

"Don't ask me what's got into him now," I told the bosun irritably when he inquired. We were rigging jury masts by moonlight and lamplight, and we were overhauling the spare suit of sails we'd dug out of the sail locker. "Only one thing I know. Everyone figured he was an iceberg. Never had any feelings. Well, everyone was wrong."

"There ain't no question there," bosun agreed. "He's crazy."

"I didn't mean that," I said. "I meant something finally got under his skin. They talked about his being an old man and through. Well, he's going to show 'em. He's got his pride. Who'd ever thought of Old Ironface doing anything just for pride?"

So we both marveled even as we worked, and before morning the "Pride of Haarlem" was running south, taking sprays all along her lee side and thrilling to the sea lift



along her keel. Running away from the help that was certainly already on its way. No, it didn't make sense.

We were hove to for thirty-six hours in the teeth of a full gale soon after we got under way, and then later we boxed the compass for a week or more with light airs and baffling calms. And do you

know what we did then? We cleaned up the ship. I don't mean we washed her down and straightened out little matters. We gave her the works.

We replaced the temporary patching of the bulwarks with permanent work. We cut and trimmed topmasts and a couple of yards from spare spars we found, and from the lumber below decks. We all but rebuilt the midship house, repaired the after skylights, made proper hatches for the holds. We caulked, pitched, scraped and holy-stoned the decks. We scraped, sanded and revarnished the bright work. We scraped and oiled the masts and spars. We rerigged her almost from stem to stern with the stores she had on board and some we had had sent over from the "Prince Harry." And lastly, when it was calm enough, we slung stages overside and painted her.

Don't tell me it was all mad. Of course it was. Instead of heading for the nearest port, as we should have with a salvage job, we just hung off and on, sometimes not more than two hundred miles from the coast, and made



the "Pride of Haarlem" into a beauty and a joy. You could almost feel her take on new life as we groomed her. She seemed to sit more lightly on the water, she developed a pert flip to her bow lift, and she answered her helm like a race horse. Probably it was imagination on my part, but that's how it seemed to me. And Old Ironface was in the middle of things, working with us, his shirt sleeves up and his shirt spotted with tar and paint and the clean dirt of seamanship.

He did not seem to change, himself. He was still grim, impassive, cold and methodical. Only in the snap of his voice, in the swift, assured orders he gave did he seem different. The thing that made me wonder was how he regained so quickly all his windship knowledge. He couldn't have trod a sailing ship's decks for nearly forty years, but he took over as if it had only been yesterday. There were times, it was true, when he'd consult with me over some small matter on which he'd grown vague, but by and large he remembered. I don't know how he did it. How do you manage to ride a bicycle or to swim after a lifetime? It's just one of those matters that are learned in youth and are never really forgotten.

I'll never forget one wild, moonlight night, when we were all shipshape and shining, running before a stiff wind and under a bright yellow moon, with the glints along the sea crests and the hollows filled with shadows, while the cold spray rainbowed over the bow. We were carrying far too much canvas, in my judgment, and I said so, but Old Ironface only gripped the teak of the for'ard taffrail and let the wind lift his silvery hair.

"I never shortened," he rasped. "Never, until the royals went!"

"We're not a clipper with special driving gear," I pointed out. "And I'm not sure . . ."

"I'll take care of that," he snapped. "Get below!"

I didn't go below. No one went below that night. Every man jack of us was scared stiff. We logged a cool fourteen knots until dawn, and every backstay and brace was shivering like a tortured thing. More than once I thought he'd drive her under, but he seemed to know. He seemed to know just what she'd do. And after dawn, when we raced by a plodding, smoke-hung tramp, and left her far astern, for the first and last time in my life I heard Old Ironface laugh.

"By gad," he said, "we're still good!"

The pride of the man. The pride *in* the man. He hadn't any sentiment. That was probably true. But he had something. That iron pride. It was like the last thundering battle shout of a dying Viking; the last salute of an era. And so, in the end, we came to port.

Even that we did spectacularly. I don't suppose there'd been seen a ship such as ours for a generation. Windjammers, yes. Tired, worn, grimy things hesitantly fluttering in. But we came in like a queen, in glamor and in glory! We came in with our bright work shining and our canvas white as snow (we'd scrubbed it for hours and hours before bending). We came in with the hull trim with new paint and our rigging tarred down, even our anchors polished and varnished (not painted) so they shone like silver. We didn't take a tug, the wind was right and

we came to the harbor buoys smart as a man-o'-war (he trained us well), and we snugged canvas down and stowed it, eased to the buoy ring and made fast; the way on her judged to a fraction. And it was Old Ironface's moment. To stand there on his deck, near the wheel, dressed again in his full uniform with the golden oak leaves of rank gleaming in the sun while all the shipping stared wide-eyed. He'd thrown away the "Prince Harry" and the Blue Ribbon, but he had gained that; to bring his ship home in the ancient way. And the water fronts were the best judges as to which was the better job.

Well, there isn't very much more. Save perhaps a little revelation that came, I think, to me alone. There were perfunctory wires of congratulation from the Line and from Maloney; perfunctory until the press began to use its imagination and the story began to widen. Then Mr. Norman, president of the Line, showed up, bald head and squeaky voice and all, and he was very effusive.

"A remarkable achievement, Captain," he said. "We are all proud of you."

"So I gather," said Old Ironface dryly. We were in the main cabin of the "Pride of Haarlem" at the time, and Old Ironface was once again packing. He'd arranged with some society to have the ship bought and preserved as a marine museum, a permanent relic of the brave old times. For himself he had mentioned settling on a farm near the coast, and even, possibly, buying a small schooner, and trading up and down. He wasn't sure. And quite obviously he didn't care. For him the game had run out and the finish had been good.

"We . . . er . . . the Line has been considering making an exception as to the retirement age, Captain," said Mr. Norman. He was still a little uneasy and afraid of Old Ironface. "And we thought you might like to continue for a while as master of the 'Prince Harry.' You know she took the Blue Ribbon and you can . . . er . . . always look forward to bettering the time. We all understand your motives in bringing in the 'Pride of Haarlem.' Yes, Captain. Pride. A man hates to think he's too old to do anything any more."

Old Ironface looked at him and he wilted.

"Pride," he said grimly. "Do they think I was disturbed with their talk of my being old and finished? Pride!" He swore and bit the end from a cigar. "I think you'd better get out!" He said that to Mr. Norman, who could make or break any officer afloat. And Mr. Norman swallowed and groped for his hat. The younger and the ambitious men might bend and bow to him, but Captain Andrew Guthrie, Old Ironface, strong still with his last triumph, was kicking him out.

"All right," squeaked Mr. Norman. "If that's the way you feel about it. All right, Captain." And he left.

Old Ironface sat down and looked at me.

"Does everyone think I took this ship in from pride?" he asked quietly. "Because I couldn't have them think I was an old man and finished?"

There was no escape. His cold, pale blue eyes held me as a pin holds a captured beetle.

"What else, sir?" I managed. "You're a hard man. We

all know that. But we figure the thing really got you."

"So I took this ship home," he said, half to himself. He stretched his great veined hands on the main cabin table and clenched them. And his face grew tight. "Not for pride, Williams," he said gently. "Not for pride. But there was something else."

I stared at him and felt a little queer. It is not good to see an iron man crack. And I was seeing it then. The man who had no feeling, who had never known sentiment.

"She looked so lonely, Williams," he said through his tight mouth, half whispering. "So lonely, you see. Just as I felt. They'd butchered her lines and her rigging, but I knew her. I'd have known her anywhere, and however she looked. There was the Blue Ribbon, but that didn't matter then. She looked so lonely. All the way across the years."

He stared at me a long time. His hard face softened.

"All the way across the years, Williams. So lonely. And I couldn't let men see her a wreck like that. So I had to stiffen her up. All that work on her spars and deck and rigging. Don't you see? I wanted to bring her in as was proper."

He paused again and looked at his veined hands, and the sweat was standing high on his weathered face. And remember, there was no sentiment in him.

"Not for pride, Williams," he whispered. "But she was my old ship. Look her up in the record. She used to be called the 'Euripides' . . . my first command. . . . She was my youth, Williams. I had to bring her home!"



## THE SINGING LEAVES

*What did the singing leaves  
say to the youngest and most  
beautiful of the princesses?*

*by James Russell Lowell*

### I

"What fairings will ye that I bring?"  
Said the King to his daughters three;  
"For I to Vanity Fair am bound,  
Now say what shall they be?"

Then up and spake the eldest daughter,  
That lady tall and grand:

“Oh, bring me pearls and diamonds great,  
And gold rings for my hand.”

Thereafter spake the second daughter,  
That was both white and red:

“For me bring silks that will stand alone,  
And a gold comb for my head.”

Then came the turn of the least daughter,  
That was whiter than thistle-down,  
And among the gold of her blithesome hair  
Dim shone the golden crown.

“There came a bird this morning,  
And sang 'neath my bower eaves,  
Till I dreamed, as his music made me,  
‘Ask thou for the Singing Leaves.’”

Then the brow of the King swelled crimson  
With a flush of angry scorn:

“Well have ye spoken, my two eldest,  
And chosen as ye were born;

“But she, like a thing of peasant race,  
That is happy binding the sheaves;”

Then he saw her dead mother in her face,  
And said, “Thou shalt have thy leaves.”

## II

He mounted and rode three days and nights  
Till he came to Vanity Fair,  
And 't was easy to buy the gems and the silk,  
But no Singing Leaves were there.

Then deep in the greenwood rode he,  
And asked of every tree,  
"Oh, if you have ever a Singing Leaf,  
I pray you give it me!"

But the trees all kept their counsel,  
And never a word said they,  
Only there sighed from the pine-tops  
A music of seas far away.

Only the pattering aspen  
Made a sound of growing rain,  
That fell ever faster and faster,  
Then faltered to silence again.

"Oh, where shall I find a little foot-page  
That would win both hose and shoon,  
And will bring to me the Singing Leaves  
If they grow under the moon?"

Then lightly turned him Walter the page,  
By the stirrup as he ran:  
"Now pledge you me the truesome word  
Of a king and gentleman,

"That you will give me the first, first thing  
You meet at your castle-gate,  
And the Princess shall get the Singing Leaves,  
Or mine be a traitor's fate."



The King's head dropt upon his breast  
A moment, as it might be;  
" 'T will be my dog," he thought, and said,  
"My faith I plight to thee."

Then Walter took from next his heart  
A packet small and thin,  
"Now give you this to the Princess Anne;  
The Singing Leaves are therein."

### III

As the King rode in at his castle-gate,  
A maiden to meet him ran,  
And "Welcome, father!" she laughed and cried  
Together, the Princess Anne.

"Lo, here the Singing Leaves," quoth he,  
"And woe, but they cost me dear!"  
She took the packet, and the smile  
Deepened down beneath the tear.

It deepened down till it reached her heart,  
And then gushed up again,  
And lighted her tears as the sudden sun  
Transfigures the summer rain.

And the first Leaf, when it was opened,  
Sang: "I am Walter the page,  
And the songs I sing 'neath thy window  
Are my only heritage."

And the second Leaf sang: "But in the land  
That is neither on earth nor sea,  
My lute and I are lords of more  
Than thrice this kingdom's fee."

And the third Leaf sang, "Be mine! Be mine!"  
And ever it sang, "Be mine!"  
Then sweeter it sang and ever sweeter,  
And said, "I am thine, thine, thine!"

At the first Leaf she grew pale enough,  
At the second she turned aside,  
At the third, 't was as if a lily flushed  
With a rose's red heart's tide.

"Good counsel gave the bird," said she,  
"I have my hope thrice o'er,  
For they sing to my very heart," she said,  
"And it sings to them evermore."

She brought to him her beauty and truth,  
And also broad earldoms three,  
And he made her queen of the broader lands  
He held of his lute in fee.



## DUST ACROSS THE RANGE <sup>A</sup>

*The old-timers refused to accept new methods of ranching from a "dirt-doctor." But a young man with ideas doesn't give up easily, especially when there's a girl!*

*by Max Brand*

### I THE CHALLENGE

Off the high, level plateau of the range, cattle trails dip like crooked runlets of white water into the valley of the Chappany. Louise Miller, bound for home on her best horse, came off the level like a ski jumper from the take-off mound. She rode like an Indian. She had the brown skin and the eye-flash and the tough sinew of an Indian, though there was no more red man in her than there was mustang in her thoroughbred.

She had come back to the ranch to celebrate her twenty-first birthday and take over the management of the place while her father embarked on a two-year drifting voyage

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around the world. She had brought home in her pocket, so to speak, two specimens of man between whom she was to select a husband, and she had ridden out alone on this day to think over the two of them and make her choice. She had made her decision and she was homebound to tell big Frederick Wilson that he was man enough to suit her.

That was why she took the second downward bend of the trail so fast that Hampton, her horse, skidded under her. Then danger flashed in her eyes in the form of a three-stranded barbed-wire fence, as new and bright as a sword out of a sheath. She sat Hampton down on his hocks and skidded him to a halt, a yard or so from the barbed wire.

A hundred yards away nine men were building a second line of fence, stretching and nailing wire, or tamping new posts in place, or screwing augers into the hard ground. Eight of them were C.C.C. men, she knew, donated by the government to help make the Hancock ranch an example of soil-conservation methods to the entire range. The ninth man, pinch-bellied and gaunt-ribbed from labor, was undoubtedly the fellow to blame for this pair of fences which cut the old trail like a pair of knives. He worked with a thirty-pound crowbar, breaking the hardpan.

That was Harry Mortimer, who for two years had been at work trying to make the Hancock place pay real money. He had a one-third share in the property and had come out of the East with a brain crammed full of college-bred agricultural theory and an odd desire to teach the ranchers new ways with the old range.

His family had spent long generations wearing down

the soil of a New England farm until the bones of the earth showed through. Mortimer's father left the farm, went into business that prospered, but left in his son the old yearning to return to the soil. That was why agriculture had been his study in college, but when he looked for work after graduation, the rocky little New England farms had seemed too small. So he had gone West to improve his inherited share in the Hancock place.

Whatever had suggested this pair of fences to him, Louise Miller wanted to tell him what she thought of the idea. So she hurried Hampton around the lower end of the fence. But here the ground chopped into an ugly "badlands" of little gullies and gravel ridges. Hampton began to go up and down over them like a small boat in a choppy sea. He slipped on loose soil. And the next instant Louise Miller was sailing toward the far horizon.

It never would have happened except that she was thinking about steering the chestnut horse, not about keeping her seat. Her only thought was to blame everything, including her own folly and Harry Mortimer. Then she was sitting up, with the landscape settling back from a dizzy whirl. Sweating men were lifting her by the armpits, but Harry Mortimer was not among them. He had let her fall where she might while he climbed on one of the mules that grazed near the wagonload of posts and wire, and trotted off in pursuit of Hampton.

Vaguely she heard the C.C.C. men speaking words of concern and comfort and felt their hands brushing her clothes carefully, but she was busy wishing that Hampton would kick a pair of holes through Mortimer. Instead,

the thoroughbred stood near the fence like a lamb and allowed himself to be caught and brought back at the mildest of dogtrots. Harry Mortimer dismounted from his mule and handed the girl the reins.

"I thought for a minute that you might have a long walk home," he said.

It was hard for her to answer, so she looked him over and pretended to be catching her breath. He was coatless, with an old straw sombrero on his head. The sun had bronzed him; sweat had polished the bronze. He had the light stance of a sprinter, but around his shoulders the strength was layered and drawn down in long fingers over his arms. The pain of labor and the edge of many responsibilities seamed his face, but he had the look of one who knows how to endure, and then strike hard.

At last she was able to say, "Sorry you ran out of places where fences are needed. This is just some practice work for you and your men, I suppose? Or did you think it would be fun to block the trail and cut up the livestock on your barbed wire?"

He picked up the thirty-pound crowbar and tossed it lightly from hand to hand.

"While you're thinking up an answer," said Louise Miller, "I'd suggest that there's lots of fence to put up on my place, where it will do some good . . . Where does the fun come in? Digging the holes or seeing the pretty wire flash in the sun?"

The C.C.C. men laughed, heartily. She had understood that they lived in almost religious awe of their boss, but they stood back and laughed with deep enjoyment.

"Talk it up to her, Chief," they called. "Don't lay down in the first round."

"You have to give a lady the first word, boys," said Mortimer, grinning at them. Then he added, "Any sore places from that fall, or are you just feeling sour?"

"Not at all," said the girl, laughing with pure excess of hate. "I'm simply asking a few questions."

"Want me to answer pretty Lou Miller?" he asked. "Or am I talking to the manager of the John Miller ranch?"

"I'm going to manage it, all right," she nodded.

"D'you know enough to?" he demanded . . . "You fellows get back to that fence-line, will you?"

They departed, their grinning faces turned to watch the comedy.

"Every Miller that ever was born knows enough to run a cattle ranch," she answered.

"By divine right, or something," said Mortimer. "Then why don't you know why I'm running these fences?"

"I do know. It's for exercise, isn't it?"

He jabbed the crowbar into the ground and leaned on it, smiling. But she knew that if she had been a man his fist would have been in her face.

"How long has the trail run over this ground?" he asked.

"Two or three years," she said.

"Where was it before?"

"Over there," she answered, proud of her exact knowledge. "Over there where those gullies are opening up."

"Was there a trail before that one?"

"Yes. It traveled along that big arroyo."

"What made the gullies and what started the big arroyo washing?" he asked her.

"Why, nature, I suppose," said the girl. "Nature and the rain. What else?"

"It was the trail," said Mortimer. "It wore down through the grass and down through the topsoil till it was a trench, and the first heavy rains began to wash the trench deeper. I'm building these fences to turn the down-drift and the updrift of the cattle from the tanks. I'm making them wear new trails."

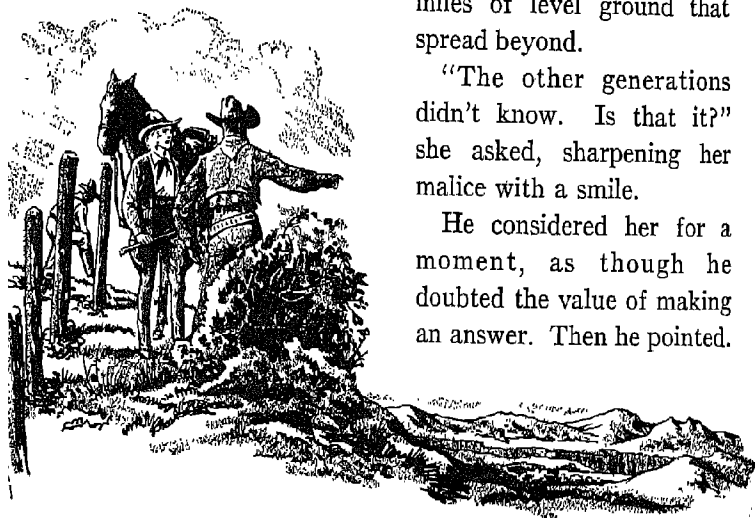
She saw the justice of what he said. She saw it so deeply that she was angered to the heart because she could find no good answer to him.

"The point is that the old range and the old range ways aren't good enough for you. Isn't that the point?" she responded.

She waved her hand across the valley of the Chappany to the house of her father and the green lake of trees that washed around it, and to the miles of level ground that spread beyond.

"The other generations didn't know. Is that it?" she asked, sharpening her malice with a smile.

He considered her for a moment, as though he doubted the value of making an answer. Then he pointed.





"See the edge of that thousand acres of hay your father planted?" he asked. "And, spilling into the valley below it, do you see the silt that's flowed onto the low ground? That silt spoils fifty acres of good river-bottom that's fit for the plow. Do you know how it comes to be there?"

"Wash from a heavy rain, I suppose?" she answered gloomily.

"Yes. Your father ripped up a thousand acres of virgin range land. His plow cut through the roots of the grass of the topsoil that's been accumulating for a million years. The rain came on the loose ground and washed the best of it away. The first dry season and hard wind that comes along, that thousand acres will blow away like feathers; and the earth will have a million years of work to do all over again."

"Father had to have extra hay," said the girl. "That's why he planted. What else was he to do?"

"Look down the Chappany along the Hancock land," said Mortimer.

"It looks like a crazy quilt," she answered.

"Because it's strip-plowed to leave a percentage of holding grass; and it's contour-plowed in other places to keep the soil from washing. Those brush tangles in the gullies are dams that will keep the gullies from deepening. Every slope of more than twenty per cent is planted to trees; every slope of more than twelve per cent is planted to permanent grass. In another year or so I'll have every acre of the Hancock place buttoned down to the ground with grass or trees, so that it *can't* blow away."

"I understand," she said. "You've been reading the

newspapers about dust storms. Do you happen to know that there's never been a dust storm on this range?"

"There *will* be, some day," he answered. "Look at the mountains, yonder. That blowing mist isn't clouds. It's dust! It's ten thousand acres in the air this minute!"

She stared toward the horizon and, above the blue of the mountains, she saw a smudging darkness in the air. Mortimer was saying, "That's the Curtis Valley blowing up in smoke. A dry season and a strong wind . . . Here's the dry season with us, well enough. The Chappany has stopped flowing, though it's only May. Realize that? Only May, and the range is bone-dry."

She glanced down the slope at the lakes in the bottom of the valley. There were five of them extended by old dams. Three lay on her father's land; two belonged to the Hancock place. As a rule the Chappany ran for eleven months in the year, only drying up in August, and during that month the cattle came in from miles off the dry back of the range. This year, to be sure, was very different, for as the little river ceased flowing, the water holes on the farther range also were drying up and the cows had already commenced to voyage to the valley for drink. Little wind-puffs of white spotted the tableland and drifted down into the valley as parched cattle came at a trot or a lope for the water. Scores of them even now stood shoulder deep in the lakes, and throngs were lying on the dry shore waiting to drink again, and again, before they started the trek toward the back country and the better grass once more.

Mortimer was pointing again. "A dry season, and a

hard wind," he said. "That thousand acres your father plowed is a gun pointed at the head of the entire county. If that starts blowing, the topsoil all over the range is apt to peel off like skin . . . I tell you, every plow furrow on the range is like a knife cut; it may let out the life blood and leave you worthless dry bones. The whole range—beautiful long miles of it—goes up in smoke. My land lies right under the gun."

Her brain rocked as she listened and felt conviction strike her. If she could not argue, at least she could hate. Her father hated this man, and she would have felt herself untrue to her name if she did not hate him in turn.

"And that was why you tried to stab my father in the back?" she asked.

"I complained to the government and the soil-conservation authorities," he admitted. "I did that after I'd tried a thousand times to talk sense to John Miller . . . And they would have *made* him toe the line, except that he knew the right political wires to pull."

She laughed through her teeth. "Wire-pulling? That's better than rope-pulling, Harry Mortimer!" she said.

"You mean that your father would like to see me lynched?" he answered. "I suppose he would . . . he hates me. I despise him . . . but I'll tell you what I'd do. If I thought I could change his mind, I'd crawl a hundred miles on my hands and knees and kiss his feet. I'd sit up and beg like a dog . . . because he's the king of the range and, until he wakes up, the whole range will remain asleep . . . and one night it'll blow away."

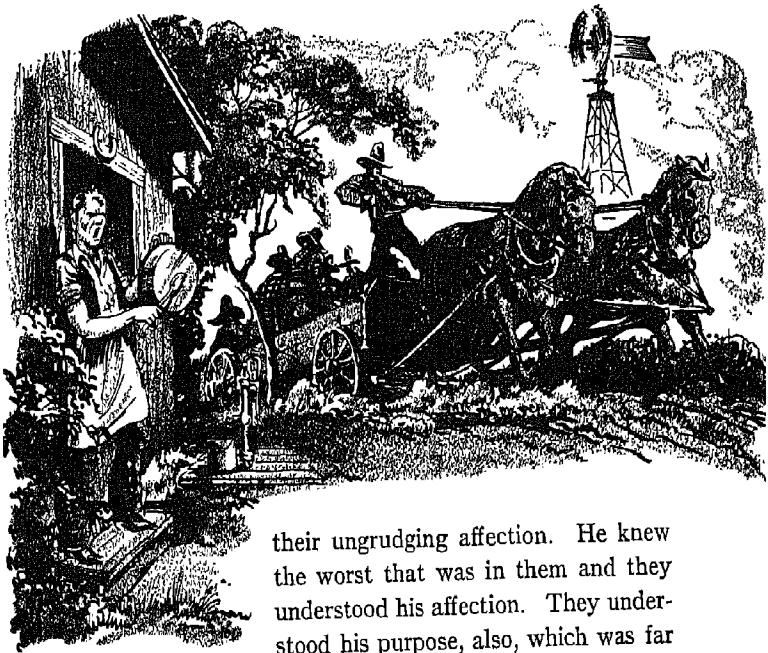
She swung suddenly into the saddle. This strange, sav-

age humility troubled and stirred her so that it was hard to find in her heart hatred on which she had been counting. The only answer she found was to say, "Why not try him again, then? This evening, for instance. There's going to be a barbecue, and perhaps he'd be glad to see you. I'm sure the *boys* would be glad. And so would I!" She laughed again, put some of her anger into her spurs, and made beautiful Hampton race like a long-gaited rabbit, scurrying down the slope . . .

## II THE DECISION

Into the wagon Mortimer loaded his eight men at noon and drove the wagon back to the Hancock ranch house. He had been a fool, he told himself, to talk to the girl with a frank sternness, as though she were a man. He could not force a young wildcat like her to see the truth, but he might have tried to flatter her into a new point of view.

A dangerous plan suggested itself to him now, and in that light of danger he began to see again the faces and the souls of the eight men in the wagon behind him. Every one of them had been with him at least a year and a half. Every man of them was like another right hand to Mortimer. They had come to him as a surly, unwilling, random collection which he had begged, borrowed, and stolen from the C.C.C. camp at Poplar Springs, justified by his intention of making the Hancock ranch an example in soil conservation for the entire range; but the entire eight had remained to become like members of a family. He gave them his time like water and they gave him back



their ungrudging affection. He knew the worst that was in them and they understood his affection. They understood his purpose, also, which was far more than simply to put the Hancock ranch on a high-paying basis. He wanted to change the ranching methods of the entire range and increase the security of the land which old-fashioned methods constantly threatened.

Each one of the eight C.C.C. men had some useful quality, as well as some weakness. Baldy Inman was the most peaceful of all. Bud McGee loved battle, and twice Mortimer had dragged him out of brawls at the risk of both their necks. George Masters loved cards and knew all too well how to deal. Chip Ellis and Dink Waller were always about to start for the gold lands of Alaska and talked about the lure of far countries 'till the rest of the boys were restless. Lefty Parkman had been in the ring and he helped by teaching the boys to box. He had beaten

Mortimer to a pulp, in spite of his lighter weight, time after time, until sheer dint of pain had taught Mortimer the science and given him a deadly left of his own. Pudge Major supplied music and noisy jokes. Jan Erickson was the giant of the crew.

It was while he thought of his crew, one by one, that the determination to take the great chance came strongly home in Mortimer. He stopped the wagon in front of the big shed which had been turned into a barracks for the C.C.C. workers. Shorty, the cook, was already in the doorway banging a tin pan and yelling to them to come and get it. Mortimer, instead of going in with them to sit at the long table, went on into the Hancock house.

As usual, he found Charlie Hancock stretched on the couch in the parlor. Because of the heat of the day Charlie was dressed in lounging robe and slippers, and he had a volume of Boswell's *Johnson* propped up on his stomach. His glasses, his prematurely aged face, and his short gray mustache gave him the air of a country gentleman reposing in a Turkish bath.

This pretense of reading had become hardly more than a pretense recently, for, since Mortimer had appeared and was willing to take charge of the ranch, Charles Hancock had sunk into a long and vicious decline. A fine education had given edge to one of the clearest minds Mortimer had ever met; it was also the most vicious mind he knew. The planning of the ranch work had been left to Mortimer, but there still remained on the place half a dozen cowpunchers whom Hancock had picked up, not so much because they knew cows as because they could

shoot straight and were devoted to him. Aside from books, guns were Charlie Hancock's main interest. If he left his house, it was generally to go hunting with some of his harum-scarum hired men. They did not mix with the C.C.C. men.

"Still a slave to your conscience, Harry?" asked Hancock.

Mortimer began to pace the room, on one side staring out of a window that looked up the valley of the Chappany where he had worked so hard during the two years, and on the other end of the room, looking vacantly at the photograph of old Jim Hancock, who had retired from the ranch to live in a cottage in Poplar Springs. On fifty dollars a month income, old Jim Hancock kept himself happy with frijoles and checkers and let the world wag on its way. The literal arrangement was that the income from the ranch should be split three ways, one to old Jim, one to his son Charles, one to Mortimer; but as a matter of fact Charlie managed to use most of his father's portion besides his own.

"Yes," said Charles Hancock, answering his own question, "a slave to the conscience that forces you to make the world a better place to live in. You see nothing but green, Harry. You want nothing but a big range and nothing but green on it. What is there you wouldn't do for it?"

"I've been wondering," Mortimer answered thoughtfully.

"Grass for cows, grass for cows!" said Hancock, laughing. "You'd die to give it to 'em."

"It's something else," answered Mortimer, shaking his head. "It's the idea of a living country instead of a dying one . . . tell me, Charlie: What would happen if I showed my face at the Miller barbecue this evening?"

Hancock sat bolt upright, then slowly lowered himself back to a prone position. "Nothing," he said. "Nothing . . . at first."

"And then?" asked Mortimer.

"At first," said Hancock, smiling as he thought, "there would be a dash of surprise. Old John Miller wouldn't faint, but he'd come close to it. And his cowpunchers would have to remember that the whole range has been invited to come to Lou Miller's twenty-first birthday party . . . Afterward, when the excitement began to soak through their systems and got into their brains . . . That would be different. I don't know just how it would happen. Someone would stumble against you, or trip over your foot, or find you laughing in his face and take a word for an insult, or misunderstand the way you lifted an eyebrow . . . and presently you'd be stuck full of knives and drilled full of bullet holes!"

"You think Miller would really let that happen?" asked Mortimer.

"Think? I know! You bring down a government commission on top of him. It rides over his land. It finds that the great John Miller has been overstocking his acres, destroying the grass with too many hoofs. The commission is about to put a supervisor in charge of the Miller ranch and cause all the Millers to rise in their graves. Only by getting a governor and a couple of senators out



of bed in the middle of the night is he able to stop the commission . . . And he owes all that trouble to you. Trouble, shame, and all. Would he let it happen? Why, John Miller's father would have gone gunning for you in person, with a grudge like that. And John Miller's grandfather would simply have sent half a dozen of his cowboys to cut your throat. These Millers have been kings of the range, Harry, and don't forget it."

"Kings . . . kings," said Mortimer absently. "The girl will be running the place in a few days. And she's as hard as her father."

"Soften her, then," said Hancock.

"She challenged me to come to the barbecue," said Mortimer. "If I come . . . will that soften her?"

"Of course it will," answered Hancock. "And the guns will soften *you*, later on. Are you foolish enough to go?"

"If I could make her fall in love with me, I'd win her over," said Mortimer, "I'd win over the whole range. If the Miller place uses my ideas, all the other ranches will follow along. If I go to the barbecue, maybe I can do it. It will make her think I'm half a man, at least. You don't hate a thing you can even partly respect."

"Ah," said Hancock. "He's a noble fellow. Ready to die for his cause, and all that . . . Anyway, I'll bet you couldn't do it. You bore me, Harry. Mind leaving me to my reading?"

Mortimer went out into the shed that housed the C.C.C. men and passed through the room where the eight young men sat with a platter of thin fried steaks which were rapidly disappearing.

"Hi, Chief," said Pudge Major. "Are you giving me your share?"

"He can't eat . . . he's fed up with the Miller family," suggested Chip Ellis.

They all were shouting with laughter as he passed them and entered the kitchen, where Shorty was stubbing about on his wooden leg, laying out his own meal on a table covered with heavy white oilcloth.

"Hi, Chief," he said. "Can't you chew a way through one of those steaks?"

"What's the lowest a man can be?" asked Mortimer, sitting on the window sill.

"Cabin boy on a South Seas tramp freighter," answered Shorty instantly.

"How about a man who tells a girl he loves her? Makes love and doesn't mean it? A nice girl, Shorty, as straight as a ruled line, even if she's as mean as a cat."

"Why, they got a special place in the worst part of the hereafter for men like them, Chief," said Shorty gravely.

"Reasons wouldn't count, would they, Shorty?" asked Mortimer.

"There ain't any reasons for doing a thing like that," said Shorty.

Mortimer went back into the dining-room and took his place at the head of the table. He speared a steak and dropped it on his plate. "There's no work this afternoon," he said.

"Quit it, Chief!" protested huge Jan Erickson. "You mean you declare a holiday?"

"I'm going to a party, myself," said Mortimer, "and I've never asked you to work when I was off playing, have I?"

"Where's the party?" asked Pudge.

"Over the hills and far away," said Mortimer . . .

### III THE BARBECUE

Harry Mortimer spent the early afternoon preparing himself with a scrubbing in cold water; then he dressed in a rather battered white flannel suit, climbed into the one-ton truck, and prepared to deliver himself at the barbecue.

Charles Hancock appeared unexpectedly in the doorway of the ranch house, a fat, red, wavering figure. He called out, "I still bet you can't do it. If you want to make any impression on Louise Miller, you'd better slick yourself up with a five-thousand-dollar automobile. You can't go fast enough in that contraption. She'll keep seeing your dust."

Mortimer looked at his partner for a moment in silent disgust and silent wonder; then he drove off through the white heat of the afternoon.

When he bumped across the bridge and finally rolled up the trail onto Miller land, he felt that he had made the most important decision in his life on the range. People were coming from all directions in swaying automobiles, in carts and buggies and on mustangs which had cruised from the farthest limits of the range, but he knew that he would be the most unexpected guest at the carnival.

Halfway up the slope the swinging music of a band reached him. He felt like a soldier going into battle as he reached the great arch of evergreens which had been built over the entrance to the Miller grounds.

Sam Pearson, the Miller foreman, was walking up and down by the gate giving the first welcome to the new arrivals and the first drink out of a huge punchbowl which was cooled in a packing of dry ice. When he saw Mortimer, the foreman came to a pause in his ready-made speech of welcome and stood, mouth open, with the dripping glass of punch in his hand. Then he came slowly up to the side of the truck and narrowed his eyes at Mortimer as though he were searching for game on the distant horizon.

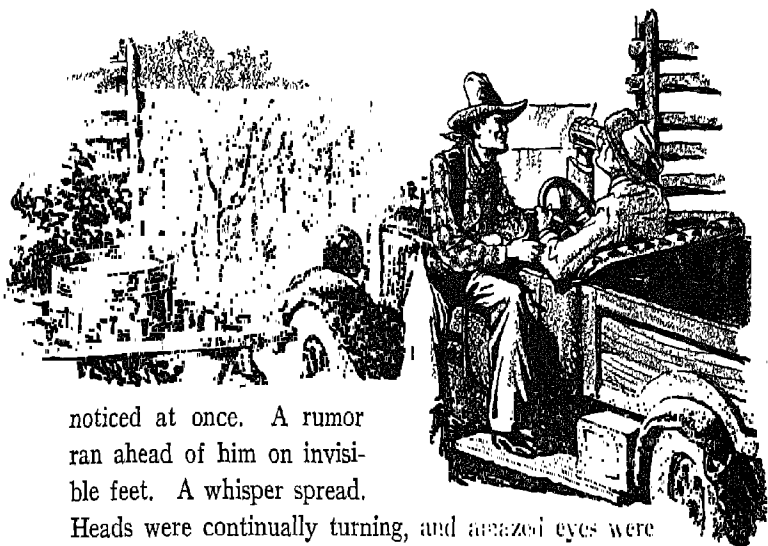
"What kind of legs have you got to stand on, Mortimer?" he asked. "What you think is gunna hold you up all through the day?"

"Beginner's luck," said Mortimer.

The foreman suddenly held out his hand. "Shake hands," he said. "You got so much nerve I wish I liked you."

Mortimer drove on into the space reserved for parking, between the corrals behind the house. There he climbed slowly down to the ground and went on toward the Miller residence, with a sense that his last bridge, his last way of retreat had been broken behind him.

The crowd gave him some comfort in the feeling that he might not be noticed among the numbers who drifted beneath the trees surrounding the ranch house. Throngs of colored lanterns swung from the lower branches. Their gay lights helped his sense of security also. But he was



noticed at once. A rumor ran ahead of him on invisible feet. A whisper spread. Heads were continually turning, and amazed eyes were staring at him.

He put on an air of unconcern, but the weight of a man-sized automatic under his coat was the sort of companionship he would have appreciated just then.

It was Louise Miller whom he watched for as he wandered casually through the crowd. He went down by the big open-air dance floor, where the band played and where a ring had been built for the wrestling and boxing which were to be part of the entertainment; but she was not there. He passed back to the open glade, where a whole steer was being roasted on a great spit against a backing of burning logs. For three generations the Millers had barbecued their meat in this manner for their friends, but roast beef was only one dish among many, for in enormous iron pots chickens and ducks were simmering, and in scores of Dutch ovens there were geese, saddles of venison, and young pigs roasting. There was such an air of plenty as Mortimer had never looked on before.

He lingered in the central scene of the barbecue too long and as he turned away he saw a pair of big cowpunchers, dressed up as gaily as Mexicans, solidly barring his way and offering fight as clearly as boys ever offered it in a schoolyard. Mortimer side-stepped them without shame, and went on, with their insulting laughter in his ears. He knew without turning his head that they were following him. Men began to be aware of him from both sides and from in front. He heard derisive voices calling out: "The land doctor!" "Give him a start home!" "Help him on his way!"

He shrugged his shoulders to get the chill out of his spinal marrow. He made himself walk slowly to maintain a casual dignity, but he felt his neck muscles stiffening. When he stumbled on an uneven place, an instant guffaw sounded about him, and he felt as though a great beast were breathing at his shoulder. It was just at that moment that he saw a girl come swiftly through the crowd, and saw Louise Miller panting with haste as she came up to him.

"Are you crazy—coming here?" she demanded.

"I thought you asked me," said Mortimer.

"Come back to the house with me. I've got to talk with you and get you away," she said. "I've never heard of anything so idiotic! Didn't you see them closing in around you like wolves for a kill?"

"Just a lot of big, harmless, happy boys," said Mortimer, and she glanced up sharply to see the irony of his smile.

They came through the trees to the wide front of the old house, and then through the Spanish patio, under the

heavy arches, and so into the house. She led him into a library. A vague, indistinguishable murmur of voices sounded through the wall from the next room, but the girl was too intent on him to notice the sound.

"Sit down here," she commanded. "I'll walk around. I can't sit still. . . . Harry Mortimer, listen to me!"

He leaned back in the chair and watched her excitement.

"It isn't my fault that you've come, is it?" she asked. "You knew it wasn't a real invitation, didn't you? Ask you up here into a den of wildcats? You knew that I didn't intend that!"

"What *did* you intend, then?" he asked.

She pulled up a chair opposite him, suddenly, and sat down on it, with her chin on her fist, staring at him. The skirt of her cowgirl's dress slowly settled around her. "You know," she said. "Those fences . . . the silly fall I took . . . and then I wasn't making very good sense when I argued; and it was a sort of crazy desire, to have the last word, and leave a challenge behind me. Ah, but I'm sorry!"

The lowering and softening of her voice let him look at her deeply for an instant.

"I'm not sorry," he told her. "D'you see? I'm here in the castle of the baron—right in the middle of his life. Perhaps he'll listen to reason now."

"Because he can see that you're ready to die for your cause? No, he'll never listen! He's as set as an old army mule, and as savage as a hungry grizzly bear. He's in there now, Harry, and I've got to get you away before he——"

Here the door at the side of the room opened and the deep, booming voice of John Miller sounded through the room, saying, "We'll announce Lou's engagement to you before the evening's over, Fred."

"But, Mr. Miller, if we hurry her . . ." said a big, handsome fellow in the doorway, blond and built like a football tackle.

"She's made up her mind, and that's enough for me," declared John Miller, leading the way into the library.

His daughter and Mortimer were already on their feet. In her first panic she had touched his arm to draw him away, but he refused to avoid the issue; the two of them stood now as though to face gunfire. John Miller, when he made out Mortimer's face, ran a hand back through the silver of his long hair and grew inches taller with rage. He actually made a quick step or two toward Mortimer before another thought stopped him and he remembered that no matter who the man might be, he was a guest in the Miller house. John Miller had the blue eyes of a boy, but they were shining like a pair of bright, twin danger signals when he came up and took Mortimer's hand.

"Mr. Frederick Wilson, Mr. Mortimer," he said. "I am happy . . . a day when everyone . . . I see, in fact, that you and Louise are old friends?"

He was in a sweat of white anger, though he kept himself smiling. Frederick Wilson, who could not help seeing that something was very wrong, looked questioningly from his fiancée to Mortimer.

"I'm sorry that I was here when you wanted to be private," said Mortimer, withdrawing.



"Ah, about Louise's engagement!" exclaimed Miller. "But I can trust you not to spread the word in the crowd? I want to save it as a surprise."

Mortimer was already close to the door and, as he turned to go through it, he heard the girl exclaiming, "But an announcement!"

"Have you two minds or one?" answered her father. "If you have only one, it's already made up. . . . Now, what is the meaning of Mortimer's being here in my house, when he has been doing everything he can to . . ."

Mortimer was already out of earshot and walking slowly down the hall, through the patio, and once more into the woods of the carnival, with the music of the band roaring and booming in his ears.

#### IV THE BATTLE

Mortimer was not noticed immediately, and he tried to interest himself in the variety of the people who had come to the barbecue, for they included every type, from tough old-timers whose overalls were grease-hardened around the knees, to roaring cowpunchers from all over the range and peaceful citizens of Poplar Springs.

Near the glade where the roasting ox hissed and spat above the fire, he saw a compact group that moved through the crowd like a boat through the sea, and a moment later he recognized the lofty, blond head of Jan Erickson! The C.C.C. men were there, all eight of them, and they gathered around him now with a shout and a rush.

He took Pudge Major by the lapels of his coat and shook him. "You're behind this, Pudge," he said. "You're the



only one who could have guessed where I was coming. Now, you take the rest of 'em and get out of here. D'you know that every man jack in this crowd is armed? And if trouble starts they'll shoot you boys into fertilizer!"

"And what about you?" asked Pudge.

"I'm playing a little game of my own," said Mortimer.

"Yeah, and when you're tagged, you'll stay 'it,'" answered Dink Waller. "We'll just hang around and make a kind of a background so's people will be able to see you better."

"Listen to me. I'm ordering you back to the Hancock place," commanded Mortimer.

This seemed to end the argument. The men were looking wistfully at their chief when suddenly George Masters exclaimed, "This is time off. Your orders don't count this afternoon, Chief. We're where we want to be, and we're going to stay."

With a half-grinning and a half-guilty resolution they confronted Mortimer, and he surrendered the struggle with a shrug of the shoulders; but already he felt, suddenly, as though he were walking with eight sticks of dynamite into the center of a fire.

A thundering loud-speaker called the guests to the platform entertainment, a moment later, and that invitation called attention away from Mortimer and his men. They

drifted with the others toward the dance floor, and from the convenient slope Mortimer looked on with anxious, half-seeing eyes at dancers doing the buck and wing, at a competition in rope tricks, at a pair of clever magicians, at wrestlers, at a bit of lightweight boxing, at an old fellow who demonstrated how Colts with their triggers filed off had been "fanned" in the old days. And still Mortimer was wondering how he could roll his eight sticks of dynamite out of the fire, when a huge, black-chested cowpuncher got into the ring to box three rounds with a fellow almost as tall and robed from head to foot with a beautiful coverage of muscles. Mortimer thought he recognized the blond head of the second man and, when the fellow turned, saw the handsome face of Frederick Wilson, smiling and at ease with the world.

The reason for his confidence appeared as soon as the gong was struck and the two went into action.

"He's got a left, that Wilson has," said Lefty Parkman. "He's got an educated left, and look at him send it into Blackie's whiskers!"

The big cowpuncher, full of the best will in the world, rushed in to use both hands, always to bump his face against a snapping jab. When he stood still to think the matter over, he lowered his guard a trifle, and through the opening Frederick Wilson cracked a hammer-hard right hand that sagged the knees of the man from the range.

"What a sock!" said Lefty Parkman, rubbing his greedy hands together. "But Blackie doesn't know how to fall!"

The cowboy, though his brains were adrift, still tried to

fight, while Frederick Wilson, with a cruelly smiling patience, followed him, measured him, and then flattened him with a very accurate one-two that bumped Blackie's head soundly on the canvas. Friends carried him away, while the crowd groaned loudly. Only a few applauded with vigor. Big John Miller, standing up from his chair on the special dais, with his silver hair blowing and shining, clapped his hands furiously; but Lou Miller merely smiled and waved, and then turned her head. That sort of fighting was not to her taste, it appeared.

Frederick Wilson, in the meantime, had discovered that the fight did not please the crowd, so he stood at the ropes and lifted a gloved hand for silence. When the quiet came, he called in a good, ringing bass voice: "My friends, I'm sorry that was over so soon. If anybody else will step up, I'll try to please you more the next time."

Some wit sang out, "Paging Jack Dempsey!" and the crowd roared.

Then Mortimer found himself getting to his feet.

Lefty Parkman tried to pull him back. "You're crazy," groaned Lefty. "He weighs twenty pounds more than you. You can fight, but he can *box*. He'll spear you like a salmon. He'll hold you off and murder you!"

But Mortimer gained his full height and waved to attract attention. He felt as if it were all a bad dream, but a bell had struck in his mind that told him his chance had come to lay his hands on the entire range. They despised him for his theories. If they could respect him for his manhood, the whole story might change. Their hostility was break-

4

ing out in the cries with which he was recognized. "It's the doctor!—It's the dirt doctor!" they shouted. "Eat him up, tenderfoot! Give him the dirt he wants, Wilson!"

"I'll try to help you entertain," called Mortimer to Wilson, and hurried back to the dressing tent near the dance floor. He had a glimpse, on the way, of Lou Miller's puzzled face and of John Miller fairly expanding with expectant pleasure. Lefty followed Mortimer. In the tent Mortimer found togs that fitted well enough. Blackie sat slumped in a chair at one side, gradually recovering, his eyes still empty and a red streak of blood running from a corner of his mouth.

"How'd it go, Blackie?" asked Parkman.

"I was feelin' fine," said Blackie. "And then a barn door slammed on my face."

Lefty Parkman led his chief down through the crowd, and poured savage advice at him every step of the way. "Keep your left hand up," he cautioned. "Don't mind if he raises some bumps with his left. It's his right that rings all the bells. Don't give him a clean shot with it. Keep jabbing. Work in close, and hammer the body. And if you get a chance try the old one-two. Keep the one-two in your head like a song . . . And good luck, Chief!"

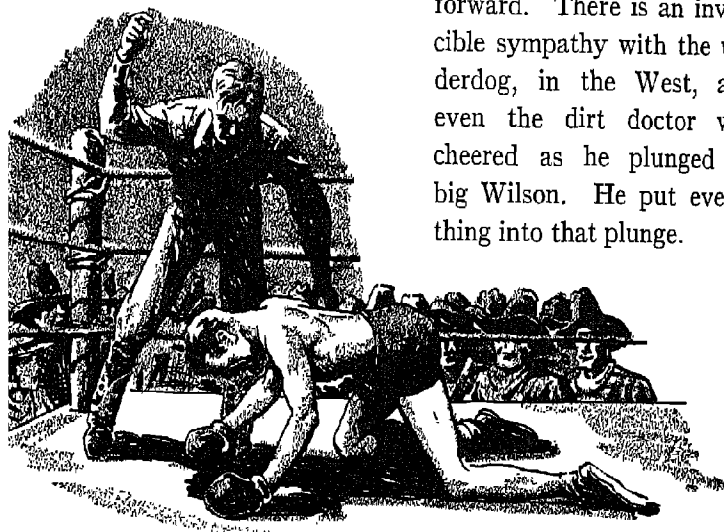
The strained, anxious faces of the C.C.C. men were the last pictures that Mortimer saw as he squared off with Wilson when the bell rang. Then a beautiful straight left flashed in his eyes. He ducked under it and dug both hands into the soft of Wilson's body. At least, it should have

been soft, but it was like punching rolls of India rubber.

They came out of the clinch with the crowd suddenly roaring applause for the dirt doctor, but Mortimer knew he had not hurt the big fellow. He had stomach muscles like a double row of clenched fists. And he was smiling as he came in again behind the beautiful, reaching straight left. Mortimer remembered with a sudden relief that the rounds were only two minutes long. But merely to endure was not enough. He wanted to wipe Frederick Wilson out of Louise Miller's mind.

He side-stepped the straight left and used his own. It landed neatly, but high on the face. As Wilson shifted in, Mortimer nailed him with the one-two in which Lefty Parkman had drilled him so hard during those remorseless Sundays at the ranch. It stopped Wilson like a wall, but the right hand had not found the knock-out point. Mortimer jumped in with a long, straight left to follow up his advantage, and the wave of uproar behind him washed him

forward. There is an invincible sympathy with the underdog, in the West, and even the dirt doctor was cheered as he plunged at big Wilson. He put everything into that plunge.



What happened then, Mortimer could not exactly tell. He felt his left miss and slither over Wilson's shoulder. Then a stick of dynamite exploded in his brain.

He had hurt his knees. That was the next thing he knew. And his brain cleared to admit a tremendous noise of shouting people. He was on his hands and knees on the floor of the ring, with the referee swaying an arm up and down beside his face, counting: "five . . . six . . . seven . . ."

Mortimer came to his feet. He saw Wilson stepping toward him like a giant crane, and the ready left hand was like the crane's beak aimed at a frog. Mortimer ducked under the two-handed attack. But the glancing weight of it carried him like a tide of water against the ropes. Head and body, alternately, the punches hammered him. He saw the tight-lipped smile of pleasure and effort as Wilson worked. The man loved his job; and a bursting rage gave Mortimer strength to fight out into the open.

His head was fairly clear, now. He gave as good as he was taking. He noticed that the gloves were soft and big. They might raise lumps, but only a flush hit was apt to break the skin. He threw another long left. And again he felt his arm glance harmlessly over Wilson's shoulder. Again a blow struck him from nowhere and exploded a bomb of darkness in his brain. Something rapped sharply against the back of his head.

That was the canvas of the ring. He was knocked flat. The audience waited breathlessly.

He seemed to be swimming out of a river of blackness with a current that shot him downstream toward disaster. Fiercely he struggled . . . and found himself turning on one side, while the swaying arm of the referee seemed to sound the seconds as upon a gong: "six . . . seven . . . eight . . ."

He got to his knees. Through a dun-colored fog he saw John Miller waving his arms in exultation; but Lou Miller's face was turned away.

That was why Mortimer got to his feet as the tenth count began. He ducked under Wilson's big arms and held on. Then the bell rang the end of that round, and the savagely gripping hands of Lefty Parkman were dragging him to his corner.

The whole group of his eight men were piled around him, Erickson weeping with rage, while he and Pudge Major and Dink Waller swung towels to raise a breeze; Chip Ellis and George Masters were massaging his legs, while Bud McGee rubbed the loose of his stomach muscles to restore their normal tension, and Baldy Inman held the water bottle. But Lefty Parkman, clutching him with one arm, whispered or groaned instructions at his ear.

"Lefty, what's he hitting me with?" begged Mortimer.

"Listen, you!" said Parkman. "When you try the straight left he doesn't try to block it. He lets it come in with a right uppercut. He's killing you. Lemme say that you've broken your arm! He'll kill you, Chief; and if he does Jan Erickson is going to murder him, and there'll be trouble all over the lot! . . . Lemme throw in the



towel, and you can quit and . . . That's best to do now . . . Don't be a fool, I tell you."

"If you throw in the towel . . ." said Mortimer through his teeth—but then the gong sounded and he stepped out, feeling as though he were wading against a stiff current of water.

Wilson came right in at him, fiddling with a confident left to make way for a right-hander that would finish the bout; and as Mortimer's ears cleared he could hear the crowd stamping and shouting, "Sock him, Doc! . . . Break a hole in him! . . . Plow him up! . . . Hi, Doctor Dirt!"

Wilson dismissed this cheering for the underdog with a twitching grin and lowered his right to invite a left lead.

The wisdom of Lefty Parkman's observations remained in Mortimer's brain as he saw the opening. It was only a long feint that he used. Instantly the device which Parkman had explained was apparent. Without attempting to block the punch, Wilson side-stepped to slip the blow and, dropping his right, stepped in for a lifting uppercut, his eyes pinched to a glint of white as he concentrated on the knockout wallop.

That was what Mortimer had hoped. The feint he held for an instant until his body almost swayed forward off balance. Then he used the one-two which Lefty had made him master. The right went to the chin no harder, say, than the tapping hammer of the master blacksmith. It gave the distance, the direction for the sledgehammer stroke of the left that followed, and through the soft,

thick padding of the glove Mortimer felt his knuckles lodge against the bone of the jaw. He had hit with his full power and Wilson had stepped straight into the blow.

It buckled Wilson's knees. He covered up, instinctively, lurching forward to clinch, and over his shoulder Mortimer saw John Miller with his hands dangling limply, unable to applaud this startling change of fortune. But Lou Miller was on her feet, bent forward.

He saw this double picture. Then he lifted two blows to Wilson's head and sent him swaying back on his heels. There was the whole length of the body open to the next blow. Mortimer plunged his right straight into that defenseless target and doubled it up like a jackknife.

He stepped back as Wilson fell on his knees, embracing his tormented body with one arm. The other hand gestured to the referee.

"Foul!" said the lips of Wilson.

"Get up and fight," ordered the referee, as he began his count. He was a tough fellow, this referee. He had done some fighting in his own youth. He despised the kind of man who claims a foul every time he's hurt, even if no foul has been committed.

Wilson struggled to one knee, making faces that indicated dreadful agony; and Mortimer saw John Miller shake both fists in the air and then turn his back in disgust. Mortimer's interest in the fight ended at that moment. He hardly cared when the referee counted Wilson out the next moment. But, as he climbed through the ropes, his eight men reached up to clutch him with eager hands.

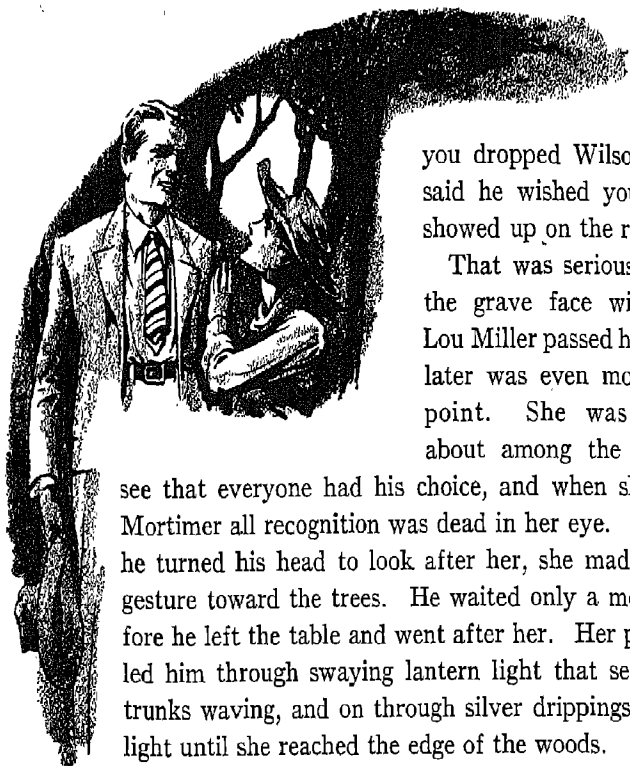
## V LOUISE MILLER

Afterward, Lefty Parkman rejoiced in the dressing tent. "You did it just the way I wanted," he said. "You hit him just as he stepped in. Oh, if you'll quit this ranching, I'll make a light-heavyweight champion out of you inside of three years. Nothing but bacon three times a day, and eggs all day Sunday! . . . Say, Chief, will you throw in with me and make a try at it?"

Mortimer smiled vaguely at him. He had something of far greater importance to think about than a ring career, for, as he remembered the enthusiastic voices that had applauded him as he left the ring, it seemed to him that he might have broken through the solid hedge of hostility which had hemmed him in for two years on the range. There remained one great step to take. If he could win the girl, it would be the greatest evening of his life, and he had determined to win.

"Start drifting around," he told Lefty. "Circulate a little and find out how John Miller took the fading of big Wilson. I'll see you later at the barbecue."

In his anxiety about further consequences he hardly knew what food he tasted when he found a place at one of the long tables in the barbecue glade, but he was keenly aware of favorable and critical eyes which kept studying him, and it was plain that while he had won over a large number of the ranchers, his work was not nearly ended. Then Lefty Parkman leaned at his shoulder and murmured, "Miller is sour. He must have liked that Wilson. When



you dropped Wilson, Miller said he wished you'd never showed up on the range."

That was serious enough; the grave face with which Lou Miller passed him a little later was even more to the point. She was drifting about among the tables to

see that everyone had his choice, and when she passed Mortimer all recognition was dead in her eye. But when he turned his head to look after her, she made a slight gesture toward the trees. He waited only a moment before he left the table and went after her. Her pale figure led him through swaying lantern light that set the tree trunks waving, and on through silver drippings of moonlight until she reached the edge of the woods.

When he came up, she said quietly, "You must leave at once. Some of the men here hate you, Harry. And my father won't believe that you beat Fred Wilson fairly. He thinks there must have been a foul blow, as Fred claims."

The hope of winning over John Miller vanished completely. But there remained the girl, and if she were to be placed in immediate charge of the ranch she would be gain enough.

"I can't leave," he said.

She came closer to him and laid a hand on his arm. The moonlight that slid through a gap in the leaves over-

head made silver of her hair, her throat, and her hand. "You don't understand me," she said. "When I say that you ought to go now, I mean that there's really danger for you here."

"Is your father going to finish what Wilson started?" he asked.

"He knows nothing about it," she answered, "but I know there are a hundred men here who feel sure Father would be glad if you were run off the range. You have to go—now. I'll stay with you until you're off the place."

He was silent.

"Will you listen to me?" she repeated. "Harry, I know what you want. You want to open up the entire range to the new ideas. Maybe you're right about them, but none of us can believe it. Do what a wise man ought to do. Give up. Sell out. Try your luck in some other place where your brains will tell. You've poured in two years on this range. You can waste twenty more and never get another step forward."

"That's good man-talk," he said. "But, Lou, do you ever talk like a woman?"

She laughed a little and stepped back from him. "Well, what's to come now?" she asked.

"Some silly sentimentality," said Mortimer.

"Between you and me?" she asked, still laughing.

He had decided to take his last chance, to win this girl's heart, which Charlie Hancock had bet he couldn't do. He said, "Has it ever seemed a little strange to you that I've given up two years of my life to soil conservation in a

country where I'm finished before I start, and where I have to share profits and work under the thumb of a man like Charlie Hancock?"

"That doesn't sound like sentimentality," answered the girl. "It sounds like the truth. No, I've never been able to understand you. I've thought you were a sort of metal monster."

"But you've noticed me carrying on? And till recently you've seen me hounding your father to get his support?"

"Of course I've noticed," she said.

"Well, can you think of anything except plain foolishness that would keep me at the work here?" he demanded.

"I'm trying to think," she answered.

"I'll help you," he said. "Remember two years ago? You were out here from school. Easter vacation. I was standing in front of the Hancock place. You rode Hampton—zip over the edge of the hill and down the hollow, and then zooming away out of sight beside the ruins of the old windmills. And wings got hold of my heart and lifted me after you."

He took another breath after the delicate speech. The girl was still as a bird in the night. The man's words seemed to have entranced her as the moonlight entranced the simple lines of her dress. She said nothing.

"What about the announcement of your engagement to Wilson?" he asked harshly. Suddenly he felt as if his words had been more than half-sincere.

"There won't be any announcement. It's ended," she replied. "Harry, what are you trying to tell me? You've hardly looked twice at me in two years."

"I was being romantic," he said. "The stranger with the great vision and the strong hands. I was going to restore the whole range, and then offer you my work in one hand and my heart in the other, like some of the foolish men in the old books . . . I *have* been a fool, Lou, but don't laugh at me if you can help it."

"I won't laugh," she said, quietly.

He went on: "I thought that if I ruled out everything but the work, I'd get my reward. Instead of that I have the people laughing at me. And I suppose I dreamed that you were receiving radio messages, so to speak, from the man across the valley who loved you."

"Love? Love?" said the girl.

"Before I leave the country like a beaten dog, I have to tell you the truth," he went on. Again, as he looked at her he wondered if he were telling the truth. She was so young and sweet. "I don't expect you to do anything except laugh in my face."

A thudding of hoofbeats and a creaking of leather came through the trees behind them. She made a gesture, not to him, but to the ground, the world, the air around them.

"I can't laugh," she said. "I believe it all. It's the crazy moonlight. You're not snapping your fingers and making me fall in love like this, are you?"

From the trees the riders came out softly, the hoofbeats deadened by the leaf mold. There were a thronging dozen of them, with sombreros pulled low and bandannas drawn up over their mouths to make efficient masks.

One of them sang out, "Stand back from him, you!" And as the girl sprang away, startled, something whistled

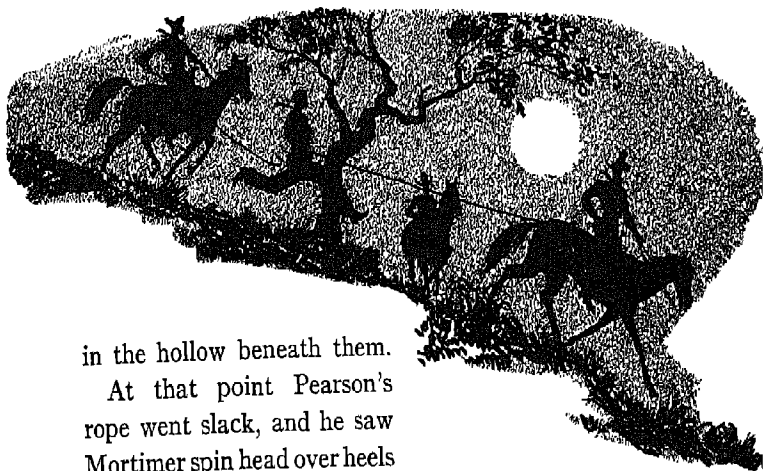
in the air over Mortimer's head. The snaky shadow of the rope dropped across his vision, and then he was grappled by the noose, which cunningly pinned his arms against his sides.

Sam Pearson, the foreman of the huge Miller ranch, was on the saddle end of the rope with a hundred and ninety pounds of seasoned muscle and nearly forty years of range wisdom. He did not have direct orders from Miller, but the indirect suggestions were more than enough for Pearson. He felt, personally, that it was an insult to the entire Miller family to have this hostile outsider on the ranch at the barbecue; and there was a virtuous thrill in his hand as he settled that noose around Mortimer's arms.

Sam's mount, which was his best cutting horse, spun like a top and took Mortimer in tow at a mild canter over the flat and then down the slope of the Chappany valley. Lou Miller's screaming protest shrilled and died out far to the rear, quite drowned by the uproar of Pearson's cow-punchers. They all felt they were striking a good stroke for the best cause in the world; and the result was that their high spirits were unleashed like a pack of wolves. Like wolves they howled as they dashed back and forth around Pearson and his captive. And, as their delight grew, more than one quirt snapped in an expert hand to warm the seat of Mortimer's white flannels.

The Easterner ran well, Pearson had to admit; he kept up a good sprint, which prevented him from falling on his face and being dragged, until they came over the edge of the level and dropped onto the slant ground, with the five Chappany lakes glimmering silver-bright





in the hollow beneath them.

At that point Pearson's rope went slack, and he saw Mortimer spin head over heels like a huge ball of tumbleweed. It was so deliciously funny to Sam Pearson that he reeled in the saddle with hearty laughter. He was still howling with joy and the shrill cowboy yells were sticking needles in his ears when a very odd thing happened, for the whirling, topsy-turvy body of Mortimer regained footing and balance for an instant, while running with legs made doubly long by the pitch of the slope, and, like a great black cat, flung itself onto Monte McLean, who rode close to Pearson's side.

There was plenty of silver-clear moonlight to show Monte defending himself from that savage and unexpected attack. Monte was a good, two-handed fighter and he struck the Easterner over the head and shoulders, not with the lash, but with the loaded butt of his quirt. However, in an instant Mortimer had swarmed up the side of the horse and wrapped Monte in his arms.

This was highly embarrassing to Pearson, who had had just a little too much punch to think clearly. If he yanked Mortimer off that mustang, he would bring Monte down

to the ground with him. If he did not yank Mortimer out of the saddle, the Easterner would probably throttle Monte and get away. There was another thing that caused Pearson to groan and that was the realization that he had kept the tenderfoot on such a loose rope that he had been able to work his arms and hands up through the biting grip of the noose. He was held now like an organ-grinder's monkey, around the small of the waist.

Other trouble came on the run toward Sam Pearson. A cry came ringing to him, and he saw a girl on a horse stretched in a dead gallop come tilting over the upper edge of the slope. That would be Lou Miller. She was a good girl and as Western as they come. But there is a sharp limit to the feminine sense of humor, and it was as likely as not that the girl thought this was a lynching party instead of a mere bit of Western justice and range discipline. The idea was, in brief, to start Mortimer running toward the horizon and encourage him to keep on until he was out of sight.

Sam Pearson simply did not know what to do, and therefore he did the most natural thing, which was to give a good tug on the rope. To his horror, he saw both Monte and Mortimer slew sidewise from the saddle and spill to the ground.

They kept on rolling for a dozen yards, and then they lay still, one stretched beside the other. Big Sam Pearson got his horse to the place and dived for the spot where Monte lay. He picked the fallen cowpuncher up. The loose, limp body spilled across his arm as he shouted, "Monte! Hey, Monte! A little spill like that didn't do

anything to you, did it? Hey, Monte, can't you hear me?"

The other cowpunchers came piling up on their horses, bringing a fog-white rolling of dust that poured over Monte. And he, presently rousing with a groan, brought a cheer from them. They set him up on his feet and felt him from head to foot for broken bones. They patted his back to start him breathing.

"Put him into a saddle," said Sam Pearson. "Old Monte'll be himself when he feels the stirrups under his feet."

So they put Monte into a saddle and steadied him there with many hands. In fact, he reached out at once with a vaguely fumbling hand for the reins and then mumbled, "He kind of got hold of me like a wildcat, and he wouldn't loosen up."

Here the wild voice of Louise Miller cried close by, "Sam Pearson! You murderer, Sam, you've killed him! You've killed him!"

The foreman, still with a hand on Monte, turned and saw the girl on her knees beside Mortimer's prostrate body. But at that moment the Easterner groaned heavily, and sat up. And Pearson took that as a signal to go.

"Let's get out of here on the jump, boys," he said. "Maybe we scratched up more than we can handle."

He hit the saddle as he spoke, and in the center of the cavalcade struck out at a gallop for the ranch house, with the wavering figure of Monte held erect by two friendly riders. For Pearson wanted to get in his report of strange happenings to an employer who had never yet been hard on him . . .

## VI MORTIMER'S RETURN

Mortimer, sitting up with his head bowed by shock and the sickness of deep pain and bruises, saw the world very dimly for a moment. Next he felt an increasingly sharp pain from a rent in his scalp near the crown of the head, where the braided handle of Monte's quirt had glanced in striking; and finally he was aware of a warm, small trickle of blood that ran down the side of his face and dripped off his chin.

"Come back! Sam! Sam! Come back!" shouted a girl's voice. Then two hands took him by the cheeks and tilted back his head. "They've killed him!" gasped Lou Miller. "The cowards! The cowards! They've killed Harry Mortimer!"

He could not see her very clearly because the dazzle of the moon was above her head, and to his bleared eyes her face was a darkness of almost featureless shadow. But the moonlight flowed like water over one of her slim shoulders. These pictures he saw clearly enough, though he could not put them together and make connected sense of them.

As for what had happened immediately before, he could make neither head nor tail of it, and it seemed to him that he was still telling the girl that he loved her now, even now, though his brain reeled and the pain made his stomach uneasy.

That was why he said, "If I were dying, I'd want to say a last thing to you, Lou . . . I really do love you."

"Harry, are you dying? Have they killed you?" cried the girl.

She took the weight of his head and shoulders across her lap and in her arms.

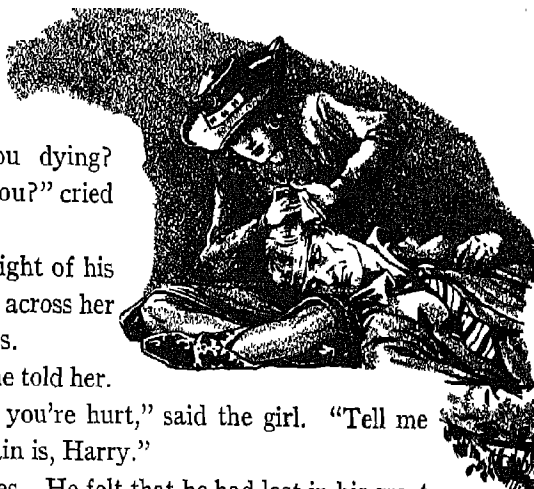
"I'm all right," he told her.

"Tell me where you're hurt," said the girl. "Tell me where the worst pain is, Harry."

He closed his eyes. He felt that he had lost in his great effort. He was not finished. He would still try to make her love him, because, beyond her, opened the gates of a new future which he could bring to the range; beyond her lay unending miles of the pleasant grasslands and the futures of ten thousand happy men. He felt that he was like a general who needed to carry by assault only one small fortress and then the great fight would be won.

That assault would have to be made in the future. Now, with closed eyes, he could only mutter, "You're so little and sweet."

She slipped from beneath his weight. He heard cloth suddenly torn into strips. The sound went through his brain and found sore places and tortured them. Then the blood was being wiped from his face and the long bandage was wound about his head, firmly. But it gave no pain. Wherever she touched him the pain disappeared. Then she had his head and shoulders in her lap again, and one hand supported his head. Louise was very tender in the care of him and sick as he was, he felt her gentle touch.



"Wherever you touch me—it's queer—the pain goes," said Mortimer.

"Because I love you!" said the girl.

He considered the words with a blank stare and could not believe he had heard correctly. "Are you laughing at me?" he said.

"I'm only loving you," said the girl. "Don't speak. Lie still. Only tell me where the pain is."

"God put a gift in your hands. They take the pain away," said Mortimer. "What color are your eyes?"

"Kind of a gray, blue-green . . . I don't know what color they are," she said. "Don't talk, Harry. Lie still."

One instant of clarity came to him. He got to his feet with a sudden, immense effort and stood swaying. "My men are back there in trouble!" he groaned. "Leave me here. Go back and stop the fight if you can. I'll come along on foot and help out."

"There'll be no more trouble. That Sam Pearson, like a coward, has made trouble enough for one night. He won't lift his hand again. But can you get into the saddle? I'll help . . . get into the saddle . . . lift your left foot."

He had his grip on the horn of the saddle and stood for a time with his head dropped against the sharp cantle, while the whirling, sickening darkness spun through his brain. The orders came to him again, insistently. He raised his left foot. A hand guided it into the stirrup.

"Now one big heave, and you'll be in the saddle. Come on, and up you go."

He felt an ineffectual force tugging and lifting at him; his muscles responded automatically and he found himself slumped in the saddle, his head hanging far down. There was no strength in the back of his neck. He wanted to be sick. But there was that uncompleted battle which had to be fought.

"Have you gone?" said Mortimer.

Then a blowing darkness overcame his brain again. He managed to keep his hands locked on the pommel; and sickness covered his body with cold drops of sweat. A voice entered his mind from far ahead, sometimes speaking clearly, and sometimes as dim and far as though it were blowing away on a wind. Whenever he heard it, new strength came into him, and hope with it.

It told him to endure. It said that they had reached the bridge. In fact, he heard the hoofbeats of the horse strike hollow on the wood. He saw, dimly, the silver of water under the moon. The voice said they were nearing the Hancock place, if only he could hold on a little.

And then, suddenly, the outlines of the house were before him. He steeled himself to endure the dismounting, to gather strength that would pull his leg over the back of the horse.

Now he was standing beside it, wavering.

He made a vast effort to steer his feet toward the faintly lighted doorway. The girl tried to support him and guide him. Then many heavy footfalls rushed out about him. The voice of Jan Erickson roared out like the furious, huge, wordless bellowing of a bull. The enormous hands

and arms of Jan Erickson lifted him, cradled him lightly, took him through the doorway.

"Louise," he whispered, "Louise."

He could make out the sound of her voice, but not the answering words. Clearer to his mind was the sense of wonderful relief in finding his men back safely, at the Hancock place. He wanted to give thanks for that. He felt stinging tears of gratitude under his eyelids and kept his eyes closed, so that the tears should not be seen.

He could hear Lefty Parkman screech out like a fighting tomcat, "Look at his face! . . . Look at his *face*! Oh, look what they've done to him! Look what they've gone and done to the chief!"

And there was Pudge Major giving utterance in a strange, weeping whine: "They dragged him. They took him and dragged him. They took and dragged him like a coyote!"

"Get out of my way!" shouted Jan Erickson. "I'm gonna make somebody pay for this!"

The stairs creaked. They were taking Mortimer up to his room. The air was much hotter inside the house, and warmer and warmer the higher they carried him. But he began to relax toward sleep.

## VII CHARLIE INTERFERES

The girl, running up the stairs behind the men, cried out to them that she wanted to help care for him. One of the brown-faced, big-shouldered fellows turned and



looked at her as no man had ever looked at her before.

"Your crowd did this to the chief!" he said. "Why don't you go back where you come from? Why don't you go and crow and laugh about it, like the others are doing? Go back and tell your pa that we're gonna have payment for this. We're gonna wring it out of them. Get out!"

Lefty Parkman left the house and sprinted away for a car to drive to Poplar Springs for a doctor; and Louise Miller went down the stairs into the hall.

The angry, muttering voices of the C.C.C. men passed on out of her ken, and the blond giant who was carrying the weight of Mortimer so lightly disappeared. She looked helplessly into the parlor, and there she saw Charles Hancock lying on his couch dressed in slippers and a robe of thin Chinese silk. There was rum on the table beside him. He got up when he saw her and waved his hand. He seemed made of differing parts—prematurely old boy, and decayed scholar, and drunken humorist.

"Come in, Lou," he said. "Your boys been having a little time for themselves beating up Harry Mortimer? . . . Come in and have a drink of this rum. You look as though you need it. You look as though you'd been through quite a stampede yourself!"

She became aware for the first time of her mussed and dirty dress. The bleared, sneering eyes of Charlie Hancock made her feel dirty. But she had to have an excuse for staying in the house until she had a doctor's opinion about Mortimer's condition. The picture of the dragging, tumbling body at the end of the rope kept running like a

madness through her memory, and the closing eyes and the battered lips that had said he loved her.

She was so filled with other thoughts that the rum-bloated cartoon of a man, Charles Hancock, was a figure she could look upon with a gentle sympathy. For he, after all, had been living in the same house with the presence of Harry Mortimer for two long years. Viewed in that light, he became a treasure house from which, perhaps, she could draw a thousand priceless reminiscences about the man she loved. That was why she went to Hancock with a smile and shook his moist, fat hand warmly.

"I will sit down," she said. "I need a rest. But no rum. I'd prefer coffee."

"Wang!" shouted Hancock. "Hot coffee . . . Take this chair, Lou . . . And don't look at the rug and the places where the wallpaper is peeling. Our friend Mortimer says that this is a pigpen. He won't live here with me. That connoisseur of superior living prefers to spend most of his time with the gang of brutes in the big shed behind the house. Sings with 'em; sings for 'em; dances for 'em; does a silly buck and wing just to make 'em laugh; plays with 'em; gives up his life to 'em the way a cook serves his steak on a platter . . . By the way, did your boys break any of the Mortimer bones?"

His eyes waited with a cruelly cold expectancy. Loathing went with a shudder through the marrow of her bones, but she kept herself smiling, wondering how Mortimer had endured two years of this. She thought of the years of her own life as a vain wind blowing hither and thither.

But at last she had come to a stopping point. Her heart poured out of her toward the injured man who lay above them, where the heavy footfalls trampled back and forth and deep-throated, angry murmurings continued.

"I don't know how badly he's injured," she said. "I don't think any bones . . . if there isn't internal injury . . . but justice wouldn't let him be seriously hurt by brutes and cowards!"

Hancock looked at her with a glimmering interest rising in his eyes. "Ah, ha!" he chuckled. "I see."

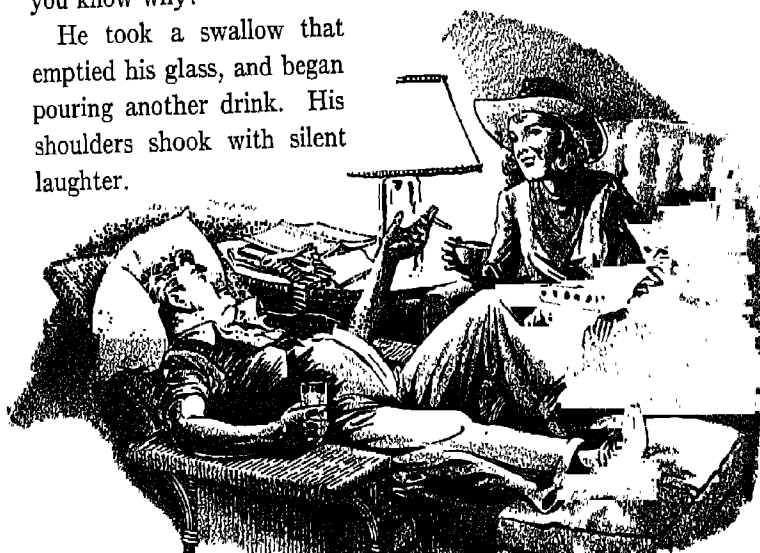
She had her coffee, by that time, and she paused in the careful sipping of it. "You see what, Charlie?" she asked.

He laughed outright, this time. "I would have put my money against it, but he wouldn't bet. I wouldn't have believed it," he said.

"What wouldn't you have believed?" asked the girl.

"For my part," said Hancock, "I love living, Lou. I love to let the years go by like a stream, because . . . do you know why?"

He took a swallow that emptied his glass, and began pouring another drink. His shoulders shook with silent laughter.



"I don't want to be rude, but . . ." said Hancock, and broke into a peal of new laughter.

The girl flushed. "I can't understand you at all, Charlie," she said.

"Can't understand me? Tut, tut! I'm one of the simple ones. I'm understood at a glance. I'm clear glass . . . I'm not one of the cloudy, mysterious figures like Mortimer."

"Why is he cloudy and mysterious?" she asked.

"To go in one direction for two years, and wind up on the opposite side of the horizon . . . that's a mystery, isn't it?" asked Hancock, with his bursting chuckle.

"Two years in one direction?" she repeated, guessing, and then blushing, and hating herself for the color which, she knew, was pouring up across her face.

Hancock watched her with a surgeon's eye. He shook his head as he murmured, "I wouldn't believe it. All in a tremor . . . and blushing. Mystery? Why, the man's loaded with mystery!"

"Charlie," she said, "if I know what you're talking about, I don't like it very well."

"Oh, we'll change the subject, then, of course," said Hancock. "Only thing in the world I'm trained to do is to try to please the ladies. You never guessed that, Lou, did you? You see, I don't succeed very well, but I keep on trying."

"Trying to please us?" she asked.

"Yes, trying. But I never really succeed. Not like the men of mystery. They don't waste time talking. They

simply step out—and they bring home the bacon!”

He laughed again, rubbing his hands.

“Are you talking about Harry Mortimer and me?” she asked, taking a deep breath as she forced herself to come to the point.

“Talking about nothing to offend you,” said Hancock. “Wouldn’t do it for the world . . . Can’t tell you how I admire that Mortimer. Shall I tell you why?”

She melted at once. “Yes, I want to hear it,” she said.

“Ah, there you are with the shining eyes and the parted lips,” said Hancock. “And that’s the picture he said he would paint, too. And here it is, painted!”

The words lifted her slowly from her chair.

Hancock was laughing too heartily to be aware of her. “Mystery? He’s the deepest man of mystery I’ve ever known in my life,” he said. “There’s the end of the road for him. No way to get ahead. Blocked on every side in his mission of teaching us all how to use the range and button the grass to the ground permanently. He’s blocked; can’t get past John Miller . . . But if he can’t get past John Miller, he can get past an easier obstacle.”

He laughed again, still saying, through his laughter, “But the rich Lou Miller, the beautiful Lou Miller, the spark of fire, the whistle in the wind, the picture that shines in every man’s eyes. . . .” Here laughter drowned his voice.

“Sit down, Lou!” he said. “I tell you, I love an efficient man, and that’s why I love this Mortimer. If he can’t win the men, he’ll try the women. Two years in one direction gets him nothing. So he turns around and goes

in the opposite direction, and all at once he's home! Wonderful, I call it. Simply wonderful! And in a single evening! Even if he's beaten up a bit, he comes safely home and brings Beauty beside the Beast. Knew he would, too. Almost ready to bet on it."

"To bet on it?" asked the girl, feeling a coldness of face as though a strong wind were blowing against her.

"What did I say?" asked Hancock.

"Nothing," said the girl.

"Sit down, Lou."

"No, I have to go home. The barbecue is still running. Hundreds of people there . . . Good-by, Charlie!"

"Oh, but you can't go like this. I have a thousand things to tell you about Mortimer."

"I think I've heard enough," said the girl. "I didn't realize that he was such a man of—of mystery. But you're right, Charlie. I suppose you're right."

She felt the bitter emotion suddenly swelling and choking in her throat, for she was remembering how Mortimer, stunned and mindless after his fall, had clung still to a monotonous refrain, telling her over and over again that he loved her. She knew that he was a fighting man, and he had clung like a bulldog to his appointed task of winning her even when his brain was stunned. The clearest picture before her mind was of the two men talking in this room, with laughter shaking Charlie Hancock as he bet with Mortimer that the tenderfoot could not go to the barbecue and win Lou Miller. Shame struck her with the edge and coldness of steel. She turned suddenly and went out into the moonlight.

## VIII TROUBLE IN POPLAR SPRINGS

When Mortimer wakened late that night he heard the snoring of three of the Hancock cowpunchers in an adjoining room. His brain was perfectly clear now, and only when he moved in his bed did he feel the soreness of bruised muscles.

"How you coming, Chief?" asked the voice of Jan Erickson.

He looked up into the face of the huge Swede, who was leaning from his chair, a shadow wrapped in bright moonlight.

"I'm fit and fine," said Mortimer. "Go to bed, Jan."

"I'm not sleepy," declared Jan Erickson. "Tell me who did it to you."

"A few excited cowpunchers," said Mortimer.

"Was that big feller Wilson one of them? The feller you licked?"

"No. He wasn't one of them."

"That's good," said Erickson, "because he's run away from the Chappany. He didn't like the side of the range that you showed him, and he ran off to Poplar Springs on his way back home. But what were the names of the others?"

"I didn't recognize them," Mortimer lied.

"It was some of Miller's men, wasn't it?" persisted Jan.

"I don't think so," answered Mortimer. "Stop bothering me and go to bed, Jan."

"How many were there?" asked Erickson, a whine of eagerness in his voice.

"A crowd. I couldn't recognize anyone. It's all over. Forget it."

Erickson was silent for a moment, and then his whisper reached Mortimer: "I'll never forget it! . . ."

A healthy man can sleep off most of his physical troubles. Mortimer was not roused in the morning when the Hancock cowpunchers clumped down the stairs with jingling spurs. He slept on till almost noon, and then wakened from a melancholy dream to find the wind whistling and moaning around the house and the temperature fallen far enough to put a shiver in his body. When he stood up there were only a few stiffnesses in his muscles. The night before, it was apparent, he simply had been exhausted.

A bucket of water in a galvanized iron washtub made him a bath. As he sloshed the chill water over his body his memory stepped back into the dimness of the previous evening. Most of it was a whirling murk through which he could remember the nodding head of Hampton, bearing him forward, and his own voice saying, "I love you!" That memory struck him into a sweat of anxious shame until the foggy veil lifted still farther. He could not remember her answer in words, but he could recall the tenderness of her voice and how her arms had held him.

Lightning jagged before Mortimer's eyes and split open his old world to the core. First a sense of guilt ran with his pulses, like the shadowy hand of the referee counting



out the seconds of the knockdown. But she never would know, he told himself, if a life of devotion could keep her from the knowledge. He had gone to her ready to lie like a scoundrel, and he had come away with the thought of her filling his mind like a light. That high-headed pride now seemed to him no more than the jaunty soul which is born of the free range. That fierce loyalty which kept her true to her father in every act and word would keep her true to a husband in the same way. She never could turn again, he told himself. And he saw his life extending like a smooth highway to the verge of the horizon. With her hand to open the door to him and give him authority, he would have the entire range, very soon, using those methods which would give the grasslands eternal life. He had been almost hating the stupid prejudices and the blindness of the ranchers; now his heart opened.

He dressed with stumbling hands, and noted the purple bruised places and where the skin had rubbed away in spots, but there was nothing worth a child's notice except a dark, swollen place that half covered his right eye and extended back across the temple. He could shrug his shoulders at such injuries, if only the scalp wound were not serious. When he had shaved, he went out to the barracks shed to let Shorty examine the cut.

Shorty took off the bandage, washed the torn scalp, and wound a fresh bandage in place. "Healing up like nobody's business," he said. "Sit down and let me fix a steak and a coupla handfuls of onions for you, and you'll be as fine as a fiddle again."



So Mortimer sat down to eat, and was at his second cup of coffee before he remembered the time of day. It was half an hour past noon and yet his C.C.C. gang had not showed up for food.

"Shorty, where are the boys?" he asked. "What's happened? You're not cooking lunch for them?"

"Well, the fact is that they went off on a kind of a little trip," said Shorty.

Mortimer stared at him. "They left the ranch without talking to me?" he demanded.

"They thought you'd be laid up today," said Shorty. "And so they kind of went and played hooky on you, Chief."

"Shorty, where did they go?" asked Mortimer, remembering vividly how Jan Erickson had leaned over his bed during the night and had tried to drag from him the identity of his assailants.

"How would I know where they'd go?" asked Shorty.

Mortimer turned his back on the cook, for he knew that he would get no trustworthy information from him. He tried to think back into the mind of his gang—and the first thing that loomed before him was their savage, deep, unquestioning devotion to him.

With a sick rush of apprehension, he wondered if they

might have gone across the valley straight for the Miller place to exact vengeance for the fall of their chief. But Lefty Parkman and Pudge Major were far too levelheaded to permit a move as wild as that. If they wanted to make trouble for men of the Miller ranch they would go to Poplar Springs and try to find straggling groups of the cowpunchers from the big outfit.

Mortimer jumped for the corner of the room and picked up a rifle. He put it down again, straightening slowly. When it came to firearms, his C.C.C. lads were helpless, as compared with the straight-shooting men of the range. He, himself, was only an amateur in comparison with them.

He turned and ran empty-handed into the adjoining shed. The big truck was gone, as he had expected, but the one-ton truck remained, and into the seat of this he climbed in haste.

It was fifteen miles to Poplar Springs and he did the distance in twenty minutes. As he drove he took dim note of the day. The melancholy wind which had wakened him still mourned down the valley, but its force along the ground was nothing compared to the velocity of the upper air. What seemed to be fast-traveling clouds, unraveled and spread thin, shot out of the northwest and flattened the arch of the sky, with the sun sometimes golden, sometimes dull and green, through that unusual mist. In the west the mountains had disappeared.

Three from north to south, three from east to west, the streets of Poplar Springs laid out a small checkering of precise little city blocks. Most of its life came from the

"springs," whose muddy waters were said to have some sort of medicinal value. An old frame hotel spread its shambling wings around the water. A rising part of the town's business, however, came from the aviation company of Chatham, Armstrong & Worth, which had built some hangars and used the huge flat east of the place as a testing ground. Saturday nights were the bright moments for Poplar Springs, when the cowpunchers rode into town or drove rattling automobiles in from the range.

Wherever he saw a pedestrian, Mortimer called, "Seen anything of a six-foot-four Swede with seven other men?" At last he was directed to Porson's Hotel.

Porson's Hotel had been there in Poplar Springs since the earliest cattle days and still used the old doors. There were three bullet holes drilled through one panel and two through another. If Porson's had filed a notch for each of its dead men, it would have had to crowd fifty-three notches on one gun butt, people said, for old cattle feuds and single-action Colts had drenched its floor with blood more than once. An echo of the reputation of the place was ominous in Mortimer's mind as he pushed through the doors.

It was like stepping into a set piece on a stage. The picture he dreaded to find was there in every detail. Jan Erickson, Pudge Major, Lefty Parkman, George Masters, and Dink Waller stood at the end of the lobby nearest the door, and bunched at the farther end were eight of the Miller cowpunchers, with Sam Pearson dominating the group. The clerk was old Rip Porson himself, carrying his seventy years like a bald-headed eagle. Unperturbed

by the silent thunder in the air, he calmly went about his duties.

Mortimer stood a moment inside the door, with his brain whirling as though he had been struck on the base of the skull. The Miller punchers looked at him with a deadly interest. Not one of his own men turned a head toward him, but Lefty Parkman said in a low voice, "The chief!"

"Good!" muttered Pudge Major. But Dink Waller growled, "He oughta be home! This is our job."

"It's time to clear out, boys," said Rip Porson. "And I wanta tell you something: The first man that goes for iron while he's standin' inside my door, he gets a piece out of my own gun. . . ."

The two factions continued to stare with fascinated attention at each other, eye holding desperately to eye as though the least shift in concentration would cause disaster.

Then Mortimer walked to the desk. He chose a place directly between the two hostile forces, standing exactly in the field of fire, if guns were once drawn. "I can't clear out," he said.

Rip Porson dropped his hands on the edge of the desk and regarded Mortimer with bright, red-stained eyes. "You're the one that the trouble's all about, ain't you?" he asked. "You're Harry Mortimer, ain't you?"

"I am," said Mortimer. "And there's going to be no more trouble."

A smile, or the ghost of a smile, glimmered in old Porson's eyes.

Mortimer faced his own men. "Lefty!" he said, picking out the most dominant spirit from among them.

Lefty Parkman gave not the slightest sign that he had heard the voice which spoke to him. He had picked out a single face among the cowpunchers and was staring at his man with a concentrated hatred. Odds made no difference to Lefty, even odds of eight to six when all the eight were carrying guns and hardly two of the C.C.C. men could have any weapons more dangerous than fists.

"Lefty!" repeated Mortimer. Lefty's eyes wavered.

"Turn around and walk out the door. We're getting out of here," said Mortimer, "and you're leading the way."

Lefty's glance slipped definitely away from the eye of Mortimer and fixed again on its former target. For the first time an order from Mortimer went disregarded.

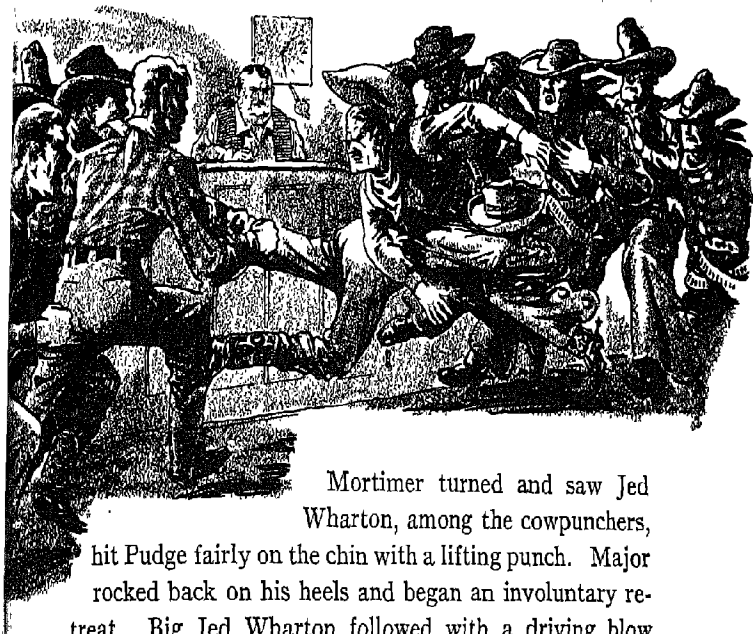
Among Sam Pearson's men there was a bowlegged cowpuncher named Danny Shay, barrel-chested, bull-browed, and as solid as the stump of a big tree. The croak of a resonant bullfrog was in Danny's voice as he said, "There isn't room enough in here for 'em; we got the air kind of used up, maybe."

One of the cowpunchers laughed at this weak sally, a brief, half-hysterical outburst of mirth.

Pudge Major lurched from his place and walked straight toward the Miller men.

"Go back, Pudge!" commanded Mortimer.

Pudge strode on, unheeding. "You look like an ape when you laugh," said Pudge. "When you open your face that wide, I can see the baboon all the way down the red of your throat."



Mortimer turned and saw Jed Wharton, among the cowpunchers, hit Pudge fairly on the chin with a lifting punch. Major rocked back on his heels and began an involuntary retreat. Big Jed Wharton followed with a driving blow from which Pudge Major cringed away with both hands flung up and a strange little cry of fear that made Mortimer's blood run cold. Poor Major had gone for bigger game than his nature permitted, and the sight of the white feather among his men struck into Mortimer's brain like a hand of shadow.

He saw in the leering, triumphant faces of the cowpunchers the charge that was about to follow. The man next to Sam Pearson was already drawing his Colt. He had no chance to glance behind him at his own followers, but Mortimer could guess that they were as heartsick and daunted as he by the frightened outcry of Pudge. And he remembered the barking voice of an assistant football coach hounding him into scrimmage when he was a freshman at college: "Low, Mortimer! Tackle low!"

"Tackle low!" yelled Mortimer, and dived at Sam Pearson's knees. While he was still in the air he saw from the corner of his eye Lefty Parkman swarming in to the attack, and the blond head of gigantic Erickson. Then his shoulder banged into Pearson's knees, and the whole world seemed to fall on his back.

It was not the sort of fighting a Westerner would expect. That headlong plunge and Erickson's charge jammed the cowpunchers against the wall. Mortimer, in the midst of confusion, caught at stamping feet and struggling legs and pulled down all he could reach.

He put his knee on Pearson's neck and pressed on toward Danny Shay, who had been tripped and had fallen like a great frog, on hands and knees. There was hardly room for fist work. Mortimer jerked his elbow into Danny's face and stood up in the room Shay had occupied.

Guns were sounding, by that time. As he straightened in the thundering uproar he saw a contorted face not a yard away and a Colt leveling at him over the shoulder of another man. But an arm and fist like a brass-knuckled walking beam struck from a height, and the gunman disappeared into the heap.

That was Jan Erickson's work.

Other men might dance away from Jan and cut him to gradual bits in the open, but for a close fight he was peerless, and now his hands were filled with work as they never had been before. As Mortimer struck out, he saw old Rip Porson standing on the far side of the desk regardless of danger from chance bullets, with his eyes



half closed as he shook his head in a profound disgust.

Mortimer saw Pudge Major in it, also. As though the first touch of fear had turned into a madness, Pudge Major came in like a fighting cat. He ran into the clubbed butt of a revolver that knocked him back against the wall. From that wall he rebounded, swinging a chair in his hands. The chair landed with a crash of splintering wood. Big Sam Pearson, who had managed to regain his feet at last, sank under the blow, and suddenly Mortimer saw that the fight was ended. Those whom Erickson had hit solidly were down, to remain down. Dink Waller was patiently throttling his chosen victim with a full Nelson. Lefty pounded a raging victim against the wall. George Masters was trying to come toward the noise of battle; but the fight was ended.

The attack had been so quick and close that most of the guns were not even drawn. Hardly half a dozen bullets had hit ceiling or floor. Not a single shot had struck flesh.

"Take their guns!" shouted Mortimer. "Let them go, but take their guns! Jan, it's over!"

Some two minutes after Mortimer dived at Pearson's knees he had eight revolvers and several large knives piled on the desk.

"Get out of the place, Jan," commanded Mortimer. "All of you get out! There are no broken bones, I think, and thank your stars for that. Get our men out, Jan!"

He turned back to the desk and said to Porson, "I'll pay half the cost of the damage."

His voice could not penetrate the hazy trance of Rip

Porson, who continued to stare into space and wag his head slowly from side to side, as he repeated, "Fourteen cowboys and not one man among 'em . . . the world has gone to pieces . . . fourteen milk-fed baboons!" . . .

There had to be some patching of cuts. So it was two hours before Mortimer rounded up his crew and had them back at the Hancock place, with the three men who had missed the fight in agonies because they had been out of it.

"I was yella," groaned Pudge. "I was a coward. The whole world knows that I'm yella."

"You needed a sock on the chin before you got your second wind," declared Mortimer. "And then you were the best man in the room. Ask the boys. Even Jan ' wouldn't take you on. Would you, Jan?"

"Him? I'd rather take on a wildcat!" said Jan.

"Jan, d'you mean that, partly?" asked Pudge.

"I mean every bit of it," said Jan Erickson. "And when it comes to working with a chair, you're away out by yourself. You're ahead of the field."

## IX STORM WARNINGS

Mortimer left them in this triumphant humor and drove over to the Miller place in the light truck. A Chinese servant opened the door to him but there was no need for him to enter, for John Miller at that moment came down the hall with a jangle of spurs and a quirt in his hand. His daughter was following him. Now he stood tall in the entrance, looking at Mortimer without a word.

"I dare say that you've heard about the trouble in Poplar Springs," said Mortimer. "I want to tell you that I didn't send my men out to make trouble; they went off by themselves, and I started after them to bring them back. When I found them, they'd located your people already. I tried to stop the fight, but it got under way in spite of me."

"Are you through?" asked John Miller, parting his locked jaws with difficulty.

Mortimer said slowly, "If any further trouble starts, it will be from your part, not mine. I've taken my beating and I haven't complained. But if your fellows come on to make more trouble there'll be murder all over the range. I want to know if you think you can keep your people in hand."

"Are you finished?" asked Miller.

"I am," said Mortimer.

"Very well," said Miller, and walked straight past him.

He turned his bewildered eyes on the girl, as she seemed about to go past him behind her father. His glance stopped her. She was pale; small lines and shadows made her eyes seem older. He had stopped her with his puzzled look, but now as she stood back with a hand against the wall she was looking steadily into his face.

"I wasn't hard, was I?" she asked. "You only had to whistle and the bird flew right off the tree to your hand. Nothing could be easier than that, could it?"

"What are you saying, Lou?" he asked.

She looked down at his extended hand and then up to

the pain in his face before she laughed a little. "You *are* wonderful, Harry," she said. "It's that honest, straightforward simplicity which gets you so far. And then your voice. That does a lot. And the facial expression, too. Do they run high, sometimes—the bets you place before you go out to win a girl?"

"Hancock . . . there was no bet . . . Lou . . . it was only that I didn't know I'd really love you," stammered Mortimer.

He saw her go by him with that quick, light, graceful step. Something made him look up as she vanished through the patio gate, and he seemed to find an answer for his question in the swift gray stream that poured across the sky endlessly, as it had been pouring ever since the morning. The sun was small and green behind it.

He got back into the truck and drove blindly toward the ranch. The subconscious mind inside him took note of the gray sweep of mist through the sky and the color of the setting sun behind it. It was not water vapor which could give that color, he knew. It was dust—dust rushing on the higher stratum of the air, headlong. Somewhere the wind had eaten through the skin of the range and was bearing uncounted tons of topsoil into the air.

That fact should have meant something to Mortimer, but his conscious mind refused to take heed of it, for it was standing still before the thought of Louise Miller. Then Hancock jumped into his mind and he gripped the wheel so hard that it trembled under his grasp.

He brought the car up short before the entrance of the

house. Three or four of Hancock's cowpunchers were lounging in the doorway of the ranch house. He shouldered brusquely through them, and went on into the parlor of the house, where Hancock lay on the couch, as usual, with his rum punch on the table beside him. He took off his glasses as Mortimer entered, resettled them on his nose, and then smote his thigh a resounding whack.

"Ah, Harry!" he cried. "You're the one soul in the world that I want to see. I don't mean about battering some of the Miller boys in Poplar Springs. That'll do your reputation on the range some good, though. Tackling guns with bare hands is rather a novelty in this part of the world, of course . . . But what's that to me? Do you know what has meaning to me, Harry?"

Mortimer said quietly, "What makes a difference to you, Charles?" and his eyes hunted the body of Hancock as though he were looking for a place to strike.

But Hancock was unaware of this.

"So you told her everything, didn't you?" asked Mortimer.

Hancock took off a moment for thought. The wind, at the same moment, seemed to descend and grip the ranch house with a firmer hand. The whine of the storm ascended the scale by several notes.

"Told her?" said Hancock. "I don't think that I told her anything. I couldn't say anything. I could only lie here and laugh."

Mortimer could not speak, seeing again the beauty and the pride of the girl who was lost to him.

"Chuck the door open, like a good fellow, will you?" asked Hancock. "I never had so much trouble breathing. Is the rum getting me at last? Well, let it get me. I'll die laughing. And I owe that to you, old fellow. Mortimer, I'll love you as long as I last!"

Mortimer went to the door and threw it wide. It seemed to him that ghosts rushed up into the lamplight, into his face. Then it was as though dim horses were galloping past in endless procession, and swifter than horses ever put hoof to the ground. He squinted his eyes into the dimness before he could understand that the swift whirl was a dust storm rushing past him at full speed; the range itself was melting away before his eyes.

A flying arm of dust enveloped Mortimer and set him coughing as he closed the door and turned back into the room.

Hancock was grinning cheerfully. "There she blows, Harry," he said. "There comes the dust storm you've been talking about for two years. Now we'll see if you've buttoned the topsoil down with all your plantings and plowings. Now we'll see if the range *has* been overgrazed, and what part of it is going to blow away."

"That dust is blowing from far away," said Mortimer. "There isn't enough edge to this wind to tear up the ground badly. It will have to blow."

The house trembled, as though nudged by an enormous shoulder, and the storm screamed an octave higher. The two men stared at each other; then Mortimer pulled out a bandanna and began to knot it around his throat.

"Get your hand-picked cowpunchers on the job, Charlie," he suggested.

"It's dark, brother," said Hancock, "and the kind of lads I have don't work in the night."

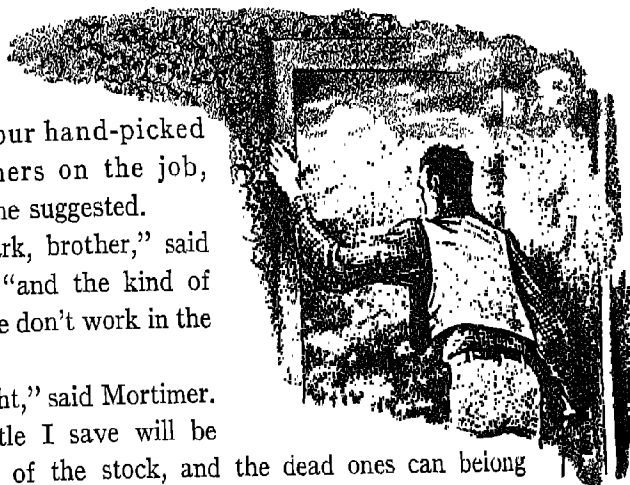
"All right," said Mortimer. "The cattle I save will be my share of the stock, and the dead ones can belong to you."

He left the room, with Hancock shouting loudly, "Wait a minute, Harry! All for one and one for all . . ."

When Mortimer stepped into the open the gale was blowing hard enough to set his eyelids trembling. It came at him like a river of darkness. He bumped the corner of the house, turning toward the barracks shed, and then the wind caught him from the side and set him staggering.

The light in the window of the shed was a dull, greenish blur. He had to fumble to find the door, and he pressed his way in, to find a jingling of pots and pans in the kitchen and the C.C.C. men sneezing and choking in the mist which filtered rapidly through the cracks in the walls of the shed. They stood up and looked silently toward him for an explanation.

He said, "It's the dust storm, boys. Pulled at my feet like water . . . No man has to go out into weather like this, but if any of you volunteer to give a hand . . ."



Jan Erickson turned his head slowly to survey the group. "Let me see the man that *won't* volunteer," he said ominously.

But not one of them hung back. They were a solid unit, and a speechless content filled Mortimer's heart, till Shorty appeared in the kitchen door, shouting, "There's gunna be plenty of grit in the flour bin and mud in the coffee, Chief!"

A louder howling of the wind seemed to answer Shorty directly and set the men laughing. They equipped themselves as Mortimer directed, with shirts buttoned close at neck and wrist to keep out the flying sand, and with bandannas ready to pull up over mouth and nose. A big canteen to each should give enough water to wash the mouth clean for a few hours and keep the bandanna wet in case it were necessary to strain the dust out more thoroughly. Four of them would ride with Charlie Hancock's cowpunchers to help handle the cattle, which probably were drifting rapidly before the storm and lodging helpless against the fencelines. The thing to do was to get the weakest of the livestock into the barns and round up the mass of them in the Chappany Valley, where Mortimer's young groves of trees would give some shelter against the whip of the wind and the drifting of the soil. It was true that all this work properly belonged to Hancock's cowpunchers, but under Mortimer's control the C.C.C. men had learned every detail of the ranch work long ago.

They went out with Mortimer now and worked all night.



The wind kept coming like a thousand devils out of the northwest, and into the southeast, at the farthest limit of the Hancock land, Mortimer led a group of the C.C.C. men. They found two hundred steers drifted against a barbed wire fence, with their heads down and the drift sand already piled knee-deep around them. There they would remain until the sand heaped over them in a great dune. It required hard work to turn the herd, shooting guns in their faces, shouting and flogging, but at last it began to move back toward the Chappany Valley.

Streaks and slitherings of moonlight that got through the hurly-burly showed the cattle continually drifting aslant, to turn their faces from the storm. It was like riding into a sandblast. In five minutes a fine silt had forced its way under tight wristbands and down the collars of the punchers, so that a crawling discomfort possessed their bodies. Dust was thick on every tongue, and there was a horrible sense of the lungs' filling, so that breathing was more labored, though less air got to the blood.

When they had jammed those steers into the Chappany, letting them drink on the way at the lower of the two Hancock lakes, they pushed the herd into one of the groves of trees which Mortimer had planted two years before. The slant of the ground gave some protection. The spindling trees by their multitude afforded a fence which seemed to whip and filter the air somewhat cleaner. Even that push against the dusty wind had been almost too much for some of the cattle. A good many of them

did not mill at all, but slumped to their knees. The others, wandering, lowing, and bellowing, pooled up around the steers that went down, and presently the entire herd was holding well. But some of those that had gone down would be dead before morning.

It was not a time to count small losses, however. It was like riding out a storm in an old, cranky, and helpless ship. The cargo hardly mattered. Life was the thing to consider.

Mortimer washed out his nose and throat from his canteen and moistened the bandanna which covered the lower part of his face. He sent his contingent of riders back to find more fence-lodged cattle and aimed his own tough cow pony at a dim twinkle of lanterns high up across the valley, above the three Miller lakes. He could guess what those lights indicated, and the picture of disaster bulked suddenly in his mind greater and blacker than the storm itself.

## X DUST STORM

Mortimer took the way straight up the valley and rode the slope toward Miller's thousand acres of plowed ground. Heading into the wind, in this manner, it was impossible to keep the eyes open very long at a time. No matter how narrowly he squinted, the fine silt blew through the lashes and tormented the eyeballs. He had to pick direction from time to time, checking the pony's efforts to turn its head from the torment; otherwise he kept his eyes fast shut.

There were two square miles of that plowed and hay-covered cropland. He came up on the northern edge of it and found the mustang stepping on hard, smooth ground. When he used his flashlight, he saw that the border acres which edged toward the wind had blown away like a dream. The reddish hardpan, tough as burned bricks, was all that remained!

He dismounted, tried to clear his throat, and found that the choke of the dust storm had penetrated to the bottom of his lungs like thick smoke. Panic stormed up in his brain. He beat the terror down and went on about his observations. There were things to see, here, which should be reported exactly in the notebook that was his source of information to be sent to the government.

It was a dark moment of the storm, for the wind came on with a scream and a steel-edge whistling through the hay, and the moon was shut away almost entirely. It merely showed in the sky vague tumblings and shapeless rollings of dust that seemed to spill more loosely across the heavens than mere clouds ever do; and sometimes it was as though the earth had exploded and the results of the explosion were hanging motionless in the air. But what he wanted to see was far more intimately close at hand.

He went over the bared ground to the rim of the yet standing hay. In places it was rolled back and heaped like matting; sometimes it gathered in cone-shaped masses like shocked hay; but every now and then the wind got its finger tips under the shocks and the rolls and blew them

to smithereens with a single breath. On his knees Mortimer turned the flashlight on the edge of the hayland and watched the action of the storm. At that point the life-sustaining humus was about a foot deep to the hardpan. The top portion, which had been loosened by the plow, ran down from four to six inches, and this part gave way rapidly, sifting from around the white roots of the hay until each stalk, at the end, was suddenly jerked away. In the meantime, the scouring blast worked more gradually at the lower, unplowed layer of the soil, which was compacted with the fine, hair-like roots of the range grass. Even this gave way with amazing rapidity.

The hayland was doomed. An army, working hand to hand, could not have saved it. As he mounted, the swinging ray of the electric torch showed Mortimer another horseman who sat the saddle not far away, impassive. The long-legged horse kept picking up its feet nervously and making small bucking movements of protest, but the rider held it like a pitching boat in a rough sea. Mortimer,



coming nearer, saw the masked face and the sand-reddened eyes of John Miller, who was watching twelve thousand dollars' worth of hay and fifty thousand irreplaceable dollars' worth of topsoil blow away. Impassively, by the ragged glimpses of light which the moon offered, the rancher stared at the quick destruction. Mortimer rode to his side and shouted, "Sorry, Miller!"

John Miller gave him a silent glance, and then resumed his study of the growing ruin before him. Mortimer turned his mustang back into the Chappany Valley.

He passed over a long stretch of the Miller bottom land which had been plowed for onions and potatoes. The deep, black soil was withering away into pockmarks, or dissolving under the breath of the storm. Mortimer groaned as he paused to watch the steady destruction. That heavy loam had formed centuries or hundreds of centuries before among the roots of the forested uplands. Rain had washed it gradually into the rivers. The Chappany floods had spread it over the flat of the valley lands. And this rich impost which nature had spread in ten thousand careful layers was blowing headlong away, forever! It seemed to Mortimer that all America was vanishing from beneath his feet.

He hurried on down the Chappany, looking again and again, anxiously, toward the flickering line of lanterns that shone from the high ground above the Miller lakes. He had warned Miller two years ago, by word and by example, about the danger of those rolling sand dunes above the bluff. If a great wind came from this quarter,

the whole mass of sand might come to life like water and spill over the edge of the bluff to fill the lakes beneath and sponge up the priceless liquid.

Then the wind came down the Chappany Valley like dark water rushing through a flume, and the lanterns were dimmed.

Out of the sweeping dimness, which sometimes blew his horse sliding, he came back onto the Hancock land and dismounted. With his flashlight he studied half a mile of terrain. On one side, some contour-plowing was commencing to blow a little, but, everywhere else he looked, his trees, his stretches of shrubbery over exposed shoulders, and the tough grasses with wide-spreading roots which he had planted were buttoning the soil to the hardpan, holding the ground like a green overcoat of varying textures.

One shouting burst of triumph filled his throat, but after that the joy slipped away from him and left his heart cold. For somehow his soul had struck roots in the whole countryside. Now hundreds of thousands of good acres all over the range were threatened.

He turned his horse up the slope, where the bluff diminished to a reasonable slope. Off to the left the headlights of an automobile came bucking through the dimness. A great truck went by him, roaring, with a load of long timbers.

Mortimer's heart sank, for he knew the meaning of that. He spurred the mustang on behind the lighted path of the truck until he reached the sand dunes immediately above

the two long lakes which belonged on the Hancock land and held water for the Hancock cattle.

The sand which came on the whistling wind, up there, cut at the skin and endangered the eyes, but his flashlight showed him no portion of the Hancock dunes wearing under the storm! From the edge of the bluff and back for a hundred yards, he had planted a tough Scotch shrub which had the look of heather. For fuel it was useless. No cattle would graze on those bitter, varnished leaves. That shrubbery served no purpose in the world except to shield the ground under it. It grew not more than a foot high, but it spread in such solid masses that wind could not get at its roots.

Behind the shrubbery he had planted fifty rows of tough saplings, close as a fence. They had grown slowly, but the thickened trunks stood up now like solidly built palings against the storm. Beyond them, and stretching as far as the dunes rolled into the back country, Mortimer had covered every inch of the ground with a grass from the Russian steppes, where eight months of the year the earth is frozen, and where for four months this close-growing, stubborn grass covers the soil like a blanket of a fine weave and offers a steady pasturage for wandering herds of small cattle. For two years it had been rooting and spreading, and now it clothed the dunes behind the Hancock lakes with unbroken cover. The dunes themselves had been anchored, here, but the flying silt which filled the air was banking up outside the farther lines of his fence of saplings. It was conceivable that if the storm

continued for days it might gradually heap the waves of sand so high that the trees would be overwhelmed; but little of the sweeping sand could ever roll over the bluff and drop into the lakes beneath.

Once more the triumph went with a riot through Mortimer's blood; and once more the triumph died suddenly away as he looked at the lanterns that stretched before him along the edge of the bluff.

There were far more lights than he had expected; and, now that he came closer, he found two hundred men laboring in a mist of blow-sand. Orders, yelled from time to time, sang on the wind and vanished suddenly. Here and there men were down on their knees, work forgotten as they tried to cough the dust out of their lungs.

Of course, the Miller ranch could not supply such a force of working hands as this. The men were from all the adjacent range. For the first sweep of the storm had choked a thousand pools with silt and had begun to damage the water in many a standing tank. The small ranchers in such a time of need turned naturally toward John Miller, but, when they telephoned, the ominous answer was that the dunes were crawling in slow waves toward the edge of the bluff above the lakes which served as reservoirs, during the dry season, not only for Miller's cattle but for the herds of his neighbors. That news brought men from all of the vicinity. The Miller trucks carried timbers to the bluff. And the entire army was slaving to erect a fence that would halt the slow drift of the dunes. To fence off the whole length of the three lakes was impossible, so they



selected the largest of the three, the one just above the Hancock property line, and here a double fence was run.

John Miller himself appeared on the scene at this time and commenced to ride up and down, giving advice, snapping brief orders. He looked to Mortimer like a resolute general in the midst of a battle, but this was a losing fight.

For the whole backland, the whole retiring sweep of the dunes was rising up in a smother of blow-sand, heaping loosely spilling masses on the ridges of the dunes, so that there was a constantly forward flow as though of incredibly reluctant waves. And the piling weight of that sand was as heavy as water.

The men worked with a sullen, patient endurance, scooping out footholds for the posts, boarding them across, with interstices between the boards, and then supporting the shaky structure against the sweep of wind and the roll of sand with long, angled shorings.

One woman moved up and down the line with a bucket of water and a sponge. As she came near, the workers raised the handkerchiefs which covered nose and mouth. Some of them stood with open mouth and tongue thrust out to receive the quick swabbing with water that enabled them to breathe again. Mortimer saw that it was Louise Miller, masked like a gypsy. He swung down from his horse and laid hold of the bail of the bucket.

"I'll handle this, Lou," he told her. "It's too heavy a job for you——"

Weariness had unsteadied her, and the wind staggered her heavily against Mortimer. So, for an instant, she let

her weight lean against him. Then she pulled up the bandanna that covered her face.

"It's a great day for you!" she gasped. "We laughed at you, did we? We wouldn't listen when you talked sense to us? Well, it's the turn for the dirt doctor to laugh while the whole range blows away from under our feet."

He picked up the sponge from the soupy water of the pail and swabbed off the sand and black muck from her face. He steadied her with one hand against the wind while he did it.

She sneered, "We're learning our lesson. If the wind leaves us anything, we'll get down on our knees and ask you to teach us how to keep it."

He passed the sponge over her face again, slowly. "You're talking like a fool, a little, spoiled fool," he said.

She answered through her teeth. "Get off our land and stay off. We'd rather let the wind blow us all away than have you lift a hand to help us."

She caught up the pail and went on, walking more swiftly, though the sand dripped and blew from about her feet as they lifted from the soft ground.

John Miller came up, fighting his horse into the wind, when a kneeling, coughing figure jumped up suddenly from the ground and gripped the reins of Miller's horse under the bit. With his other hand he gestured wildly toward Mortimer.

"You wouldn't listen to him!" screamed the rancher. "You *knew*! You laughed at him. You knew *everything*! He was only a fool tenderfoot. . . . But look at the Han-

cock place; look at the safe water; and then look at *you*! You're a fake and a fool! I hope you rot!" He dropped to the ground again, and began trying once more to cough the dust from his lungs.

Miller drove his horse up to Mortimer. "You've got three men working with us here," he said. "Take them away. We don't need their hands. We don't need your brains. Get off the Miller land!"

Mortimer turned without a word of protest, letting his horse drift before the wind. He found Lefty Parkman and gave him the order to leave the work, together with the other two. They trooped back toward the Hancock place with their chief, and, as they went, Mortimer took grim notice of how the first sand fence was already sagging under the irresistible weight of accumulating silt. But the whole storm and the fate of the entire range had become a smaller thing to him since his last glimpse of Lou Miller. The pain of it lingered under his heart like the cold of a sword. It was not the blow-sand that kept him from drawing breath, but the fine, poisonous dust of grief.

Then the thought of Hancock and how the fat loafer had betrayed him blinded his eyes with anger. He drove the snorting mustang ahead of his men and rushed to the ranch house. The thickest smother of the storm was coiling around him as he broke in through the doorway to the hall.



Then, as he turned from the hall toward the entrance to the parlor, he heard Hancock singing cheerfully to himself, and saw the man stretched as usual on the couch with the rum punch beside him.

"Hi, Harry!" called Charlie Hancock. "How's the little sand-blow? Been a hero again, old boy?"

It seemed to Mortimer, as he blinked his sore eyes, that he was looking through an infinite distance of more than space and time toward his ranching partner. The rage that had been building in him sank away to a dumb disgust. Then the telephone at the end of the room began to purr.

"For you," said Hancock. "This thing has been ringing all night. The world seems to want Harry Mortimer, after forgetting him all these years."

Over the wire a strident, nasal voice said, "Mortimer? This is Luke Waterson over in Patchen Valley . . . The wind's blowing everything to pieces over here . . . Barn's gone down, slam! Forty head inside it. Mortimer, I don't care about barns and cattle, but the ground's whipping away from under our feet. You're an expert about that. You claim you can keep the ground buttoned down tight. For pity's sake tell us what to do. We'll all pitch in and wear our hands to the bone if you'll tell me how to start . . ."

Mortimer said, "Waterson, it makes my heart ache to hear you. I'd help you if I could. But the only way to anchor the topsoil is to use time as well as thought and . . ."

"You mean that you won't tell me the answer?" shouted Waterson.

"There's no answer I can give when . . ." began Mortimer. But he heard the receiver slammed up at the other end.

As he turned away from the phone, it rang again with a long clamor.

"This is Tom Knight. Down at Pokerville," said another voice. "Mortimer, I've always been one of the few that believed you knew your business. Sand and silt in all three of our tanks. No water. But that's nothing. I've got three hundred acres in winter wheat, and it's blowing into the sky! Mortimer, what can I do to hold the soil? It's going through my fingers like water through a sieve . . ."

"I can't tell you, Mr. Knight," called Mortimer. "You need two years of careful planting, and less crowding on the cattle range. . . ."

"Two years? Man, I'm talking about hours, not years! In twenty-four hours there won't be enough grass on my land to feed a frog! Can you give me the answer?"

"Nothing on earth can help your land till the wind stops blowing, Mr. Knight . . ."

"Blast you and your books and your theories, then!" roared Knight. And his receiver crashed on the hook.

The instrument was hardly in place when the bell rang again.

"Take it, Charlie, will you?" asked Mortimer weakly.

"I'll take it. I'll tell 'em," said Hancock.

He strode to the telephone and presently was shouting into the mouthpiece, ". . . and even if he were here I

wouldn't let him waste time on you. For two years he's been trying to show you the way out. You knew too much to listen. Stay where you are and choke with dust, or else come up here and see how the Hancock acres are sticking fast to the hardpan!" He laughed as he hung up.

"That's the way to talk to 'em," he said. "You're in the saddle now. You've been a slave and a fool for two years. Now let 'em taste the spur. Ram it into 'em and give the rowels a twist . . . I wish I had 'em where *you* have 'em. They've sneered at drunken Charlie Hancock all these years. I'd make 'em dizzy if I had the chance, now. I'd tell 'em how to . . ."

Mortimer escaped from the tirade. He was still weak, as though after a great shock. Sometimes he found himself wondering at the hollowness in his heart, and at the pain, which was like homesickness and fear of battle combined. But then he remembered the girl and the strain of her lips as she denounced him.

He went out into the howl and darkness of the storm for sheer relief.

## XI CHARLIE HOLDS THE WHIP

For forty-eight hours Mortimer worked without closing his eyes. Even Jan Erickson broke down before that and lay on the floor of the barracks shed on his back, uttering a snoring sound in his throat though his eyes were wide open, and a black liquid ran from the corner of his mouth. Pudge Major developed a sort of asthma. His throat and his entire face swelled. He lay on his bed propped up into the only position in which he could breathe.

Mortimer gave the Chinaman twenty dollars to spend every spare moment at Pudge's bedside; his own place had to be outside, for greater events were happening every hour.

In the middle of the second day of that unrelenting wind, the last defense on the top of the bluff gave way and the sand began to flood down into the third of Miller's lakes. The first two had choked up within twenty-four hours of the start of the blow. The backed-up heights of the flowing sand quickly overwhelmed the third. In the thick, horrible dusk cattle were seen, mad with thirst, thrusting their muzzles deep into the wet ooze, stifling, dying in the muck.

That was when John Miller came up to the Hancock house. It happened, at this moment, that Mortimer had dropped into the barracks shed to see the progress of poor Pudge Major and had found him slightly improved. While he was there Whang appeared, coming from the house with incredible speed.

He gave the word that the great man of the range was in the ranch house, and Mortimer went instantly into the parlor of the main building. He found Hancock with his face more swollen and reddened than ever, and in the same half-dressed condition, while Miller, with ten years added to his age, sat with a steaming cup of coffee in his hand. He stood up when Mortimer entered.

"He wants help," said Hancock. His savage exultation at this surrender of his old enemy made him clip the words short. "I have the vote on this ranch," he added. "I have the two-thirds interest behind me, but I want your opinion,

Mortimer. Shall we let the Miller cattle water in our lakes? Shall we charge 'em a dollar a head, or is it *safe* to let them use up our reserve supply at any price?"

Mortimer watched the rancher take these humiliating blows with an unmoved face.

"It is true," said Miller, "that I am on my knees. I'm begging for water, Mr. Mortimer. Shall I have it?"

"You want it for your own cattle and you want it for those of your friends?" said Mortimer.

"Too many. Can't do it," said Hancock, shaking his head.

"I would be ashamed to get water for my own cattle and not for the herds of my neighbors," said Miller. "Some of us have lived on the range like brothers for several generations."

"I'm not of that brotherhood, Miller," snapped Hancock. He added, "Can't water the cows of every man under the sky. Can't and won't. There isn't enough in my lakes."

"I put six feet on each of our dams last year," said Mortimer. "We've backed up three times as much . . ."

"If they get water, they'll pay for it," said Hancock. "Business, Miller. Business is the word between us. Do you remember five years ago when I wanted to run a road across that southeastern corner of your place?"

"That was my foreman's work," said Miller. "I was not on the place when he refused you."

"Why didn't you change his mind for him when you got back, then?" demanded Hancock.



"You didn't ask a second time," said the old rancher.

"Ah, you thought I'd come and crawl to you, did you?" asked Hancock. "But I'm not that sort. It doesn't run in the Hancock blood to come crawling . . . And now I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll let your cows come to my water;

but they'll pay a dollar a head for each day spent beside the lakes. Understand? A dollar a head."

Miller said nothing. His lips pinched hard together.

"This drought may last two weeks, a month," said Mortimer, "before the water holes are cleaned out and before trenches catch the seepage from the choked lakes. The people around here won't pay thirty dollars to water their cows for a month."

"They won't pay? They will, though," said Hancock. "They *won't* pay? I want to see them get one drop of water without handing me cash for it!"

Miller took a deep breath and replaced his untasted cup on the table. "I think you know what this means, Hancock," he said. "There are some impatient men waiting at my house, now. When I tell them what you have to say, I think they're apt to come and get the water they need, in spite of you."

"My dear Miller," said Hancock. "I've lost touch with the rest of the world, but my rifle remains my very good



friend. When you and your friends decide to come over, you can have what you wish: water or blood, or both. But for the water you'll pay."

Miller looked carefully at his host for a moment. Then he turned and left the room in silence.

When he was gone, Hancock threw up a fist and shook it at the ceiling. "Did you hear me, Harry?" he demanded. "Did I tell it to him? Did I pour it down his throat? . . . Oh, boy, I've waited fifteen years to show the range that I'm a man, and now that they're beginning to find it out, they'll keep on finding."

Argument would have been the most complete folly. Mortimer sat in a corner of the room and watched Hancock pull on riding clothes. A heavy cartridge belt slanted around his hips, with a big automatic weighting it down on one side. He put on a sombrero and pulled a chin band down to keep it firmly in place. Then he picked up his repeating rifle, and laughed.

A siren began to sound above the house at the same time. It would bring back to the ranch house those fighting cow hands of whom Hancock was so proud and who owed their existence out of jail to his generosity and careless fondness for their bad records in the past. The sound of that siren, cutting through the whirl of the wind, would tell the true story to John Miller as he journeyed back to his ranch. And Mortimer could foretell the great cleaning of guns and gathering of ammunition which would reply to it.

He heard Hancock saying, "Harry, in a sense it's all owing to you. Except for you there'd be choked lakes for

Hancock as well as for Miller. But, as it is, I have the bone that the dog will jump for, and I'm going to hold it high! Are you with me?"

"Quit it, Charlie, will you?" said Mortimer. "You think you're showing yourself a man. You're not. You're being a baby in a tantrum."

"Before this baby gets through squalling," said Hancock, "a lot of big, strong men on this range are going to wish that I never was born. Before I'm through . . ."

A hand knocked; the front door pushed open, and a slight figure that staggered into the hallway in a whirl of dust now looked into the living-room with the face of Lou Miller. With her eyes wind-bleared and her hat dragged to the side, and weariness making her walk with a shambling step, she should have looked like nothing worth a second glance; instead, she seemed to Mortimer to be shaped and sent specially to fill his heart. Her eyes found him and forgot him in the first instant. She said to Hancock, "My father came to talk business, I know. But he didn't get far, did he?"

"Not one step, Lou," said Hancock.

"Father came to talk business," she said. "But I've come to beg."

"You?" said Hancock. "You're Miller's daughter. You can't beg."

"On my knees, if it will do any good," said the girl.

"Did *he* send you here?" asked Hancock, with malicious curiosity.

"He doesn't know that I'm here. But if you'll give us

a chance I'll let the whole world know the kindness that's in you, Charlie," she told him.

"Ah, quit all that," said Hancock..

"Charlie, will you listen to me?" she pleaded.

He began to walk up and down and she followed him, trying to stop him with her gestures.

"If they get anything out of me now, they'll have to fight for it," he said.

"It can't come to that. You won't let it come to that. Not on this range," said the girl. She began to cry, and struck herself across the mouth to keep back the sobbing. "And don't think about the humans. Let's admit that we're a bad lot, all of us. But think of the poor beasts, Charlie! They're wedged against the fences. The sand is drifting them down. I shone a flashlight across ten thousand pairs of eyes that were dying. Charlie, are you listening to me?"

She pulled softly at his arm, but Hancock was staring up at the ceiling.

"You know something?" he said. "Back there when I was alive—back there before I turned into poison ivy, if you'd lifted a finger you wouldn't have had to ask. I would have given you my blood—look—like this—like soup. But the way it is now, I'm finished. I'm going to get one thing out of tonight, and that's a chance to die in a scrap."

"Don't say that!" she cried out. She stood up on tip-toe, trying to look him in the eye and make him answer her, mind to mind. But he kept his eyes on the ceiling.

He said, "It's no good. I'm done. I'm finished. But

when they bury me they're going to know that I was a man. Lou, get out. I won't talk any more."

"I've *got* to talk," said the girl. "If you go ahead, there'll be murder in the Chappany."

"Get out or I'll put you out," said Hancock, looking at the ceiling.

It had been an agony to Mortimer. He took the girl by the arm and made her go into the hall with him. "You can't go home just yet," he said. "You're as weak and full of wobbles as a new calf. You can't head off into this wind."

She leaned against the wall for a moment, silently gathering strength, and then pushed herself away. She had not met his eyes once; she did not meet them now as she went to the outer door. Mortimer put his hand on its knob.

"Look here," he said, "I'm human. You came up and let Hancock talk to you the other day. But what he told you isn't the whole truth. Will you let me speak?"

"I'll go now," she answered.

"I haven't a right to let you go out and be choked in the dust," said Mortimer.

"I'd rather be choked there than here," she told him. "Let me go."

"Sickens you, doesn't it?" asked Mortimer, trying to find something in her face.

"I'll tell you one thing," she said, staring straight before her. "There wasn't any hatred in the Chappany Valley till you came. There was love!" Her voice broke. "We all loved one another. We were happy——"

He said nothing. She made a gesture to indicate that

the breaking of her voice meant nothing. Then she added, with a sudden savagery, "You're from the outside—all of you. Why didn't you stay out? Why don't you go away?"

He felt the words from his heart to his forehead, where a cold pain settled. Then he pulled the door open and took her outside. Her horse had crowded against the house, head down. He helped her into the saddle and saw horse and girl reel as she swung off into the wind. A moment later the darkness ate them up.

## XII NO COMPROMISE

Mortimer turned and went back into the house.

"Will you listen to me?" asked Mortimer.

"I'll hear no arguments," said Hancock. "Now that I'm started I want what lies ahead. You can't turn me, Harry!"

Mortimer stood up and tightened his belt a notch. The fatigue which had been growing as a weight in his brain gradually melted away and a cold, clear river of forethought flowed through him. "I think you mean business, Charlie," he said.

"I mean it with my whole heart," said Hancock.

"Do you think your father would approve of this? Would old Jim Hancock refuse water to the cows of his neighbors?" asked Mortimer.

"Old Jim Hancock isn't here," said Charlie. "He's fifteen miles away in Poplar Springs. Who's going to

get to him to ask how he votes on the business? The roads are wind-worn into badlands or else they're drifted belly-deep in silt and sand. Nobody will get to him for a fortnight. And the dance will be over before that."

"Do you know what it will mean?" asked Mortimer.

"I suppose it means *that*, to begin with," said Hancock.

He raised a finger for silence, and Mortimer heard it coming down the wind, a long-drawn-out, organlike moaning, or as though all the stops of the organ had been opened, from the shrillest treble to the deepest bass. That was the lowing of the thirst-stricken cattle which milled beyond the fences of the Hancock place, held from their search for water.

Hancock smiled as he listened. "There it is," he said. "The mob's on the stage. They're calling to me. They want the king. They're waiting for the main actor!" He laughed.

Mortimer struck him across the face. He intended it more as a gesture than a blow, but he hit with more force than he had intended, and Hancock staggered.

"Don't reach for that gun," said Mortimer.

"No," said Hancock calmly. "I know that you could break my back for me."



"I had to say something to you. Words weren't any good," remarked Mortimer.

"Is that all?" asked Hancock.

Mortimer went out of the house and into the barracks shed. He said to Shorty, "You stay here with Pudge Major. As the rest of the boys come in, send them after me to the Miller place."

"Send them *where*?" shouted Shorty.

"To the Miller place," said Mortimer, and went to the barn.

Mortimer did not take a horse from the group of saddle stock which had been tethered in the barn. Instead, he selected a ten-year-old Missouri mule, Chico, with a pot-belly that meant as much to his endurance as the fat hump means to the camel, with a lean, scrawny neck, with a head as old as Methuselah's, filled with wicked wisdom, and with four flawless legs and four hoofs of impenetrable iron.

Then Mortimer started the voyage across the Chappany Valley toward the Miller house.

The sky closed with darkness above him when he was halfway across the valley, and he had to put up his bandanna over nose and mouth, as before, to make breathing possible in that continuous smother. The wisdom of Chico, recognizing a trail, enabled the rider to keep his eyes shut most of the way. He opened them to squint, from time to time, at the drifted silt in the valley floor and the bare patches of good grass on the Hancock land, where he had planted the holding coverage to protect the soil.

Here and there, across the Hancock range, acres had



given way and blown off like a thought; but the great mass of the soil had held firmly, because for two years he had been covering the weak spots, with careful zeal. Wherever he had worked, the victory went to him, but it was small consolation. There would be blood on the land before long, he was sure. And in some strange measure that was also his work. But always, as he rode, the sense of irretrievable loss accompanied him, and that hollowness grew in his heart, and that endless defeat. He had acted out with care one great lie in his entire life, and though in the end he had found that it was not acting, but the very truth of his soul, he knew the girl would never forgive him.

When he got to the Miller place he found automobiles and trucks parked everywhere, with sand drifted body-high around many of them. The patio entrance was three feet deep in drift, and when he reached the interior and tethered Chico to one of the old iron rings that surrounded the court, he stood for a moment and listened to the wind, to the mourning of the cattle down the Chappany, and to the nearer sound of angry voices inside the big house. After that, he entered the place. The uproar came from the big library. He went straight to it and stood winking the grit from his eyes and looking over the crowd.

There were fifty men in the room, and none of them were mere cowpunchers. These were the assembled heads of the ranches of the surrounding district, and they meant swift, bitter business. Hancock, if he used guns, would not live long enough for Mortimer to get at him. These armed men would attend to him quickly, and forever.

The whole noise of the argument rolled away into silence as Mortimer showed himself.

John Miller came halfway across the room toward him with quick steps. He said, "Mr. Mortimer, no man has ever been ordered to leave my house before, but in your case . . ."

Mortimer put up a weary hand. "I'm tired of your pride," he said. "I've come over here to see if I can stop murder. Will you listen to me?"

Miller said nothing. He was reaching into his mind for some adequate answer when a gray-headed man said, "Let's be open about it, Miller. He's younger than we are. He's a tenderfoot. But I've been over some of the Hancock land, and I've seen it holding like a rock. Who made it hold? This fellow did. Give him credit, and let's hear what he has to say. Maybe we have to begin ranching all over again; maybe he's the one to show us how."

Mortimer said, "Gentlemen, a dollar a head is what Hancock will ask for every head of cattle that waters on our place. That's a good deal of money, and I don't suppose you'll stand for it. If I throw in my third of that dollar, it cuts the price down to sixty-seven cents. I wonder if that will make a sufficient difference to you. Will you do business with Hancock on that basis?"

They were silent as they listened to this proposal. Then John Miller said, "I understand you donate your third of the spoils?"

"I donate it," said Mortimer.

Miller said, "Suppose we call this an emergency and refuse to pay a penny for the surplus which our neighbors

may happen to have of what means life to all of us?"

"In that case," said Mortimer wearily, "I suppose I'm with you. I've sent for my men to follow me over here. I've told Hancock that if he shoots to kill I'll go for his throat."

He got another silence for that speech. Someone said loudly, "I thought you said that you knew this fellow, Miller?"

Miller answered in a harsh, strained voice, "I seem to be a fool, Ollie. It's perfectly apparent that I don't know *anything*."

"If you try to rush cattle down to the lakes," said Mortimer, "you'll find Charlie Hancock and his men waiting for you, and every puncher on his place shoots straight. There are plenty of you to wipe them out, but there'll be a dozen men dead in the Chappany Valley before the business ends. Another dozen hours won't kill that many cattle out of all the herds that are waiting for water. Let me have that time to get through to Jim Hancock in Poplar Springs."

John Miller came up to him with a bewildered face. "You can't get through, Mortimer," he argued. "The trail's drifted across knee-deep with sand in a lot of places. I don't think a horse could live through fifteen miles of the dust storm, anyway."

"A mule could," said Mortimer.

"Suppose you managed by luck to get to Poplar Springs," said Miller, "you couldn't get a thing from old Jim Hancock. He hates me and the rest of the ranchers of this district. He doesn't give a hang for anything except

a newspaper and a daily game of checkers. I know him like a book, and that's the truth. He'd laugh in your face. He'd rub his hands and warm them at the idea of a war in the Chappany Valley. Mortimer, will you believe me? Very gallant, this intention of yours, but entirely useless. You can't get to Poplar Springs, and, if you do, your trip will be useless."

Mortimer said, "Look at these men. They're a sour lot. They mean business. If you can't hold them for a few hours, they'll go down to rush Charlie Hancock's rifles. And dead men piled on one another will be all that I've gained from two years of work. . . . If I get to Jim Hancock I'll bring him back with me."

"I can't let you go," said Miller solemnly.

"I'll have to look at the tethering of my mule," said Mortimer. "Then I'll come back and talk it over with you."

A maid with a frightened face entered the room and said, "Mr. Miller, I've been looking everywhere for Miss Louise. She's not in the house, sir. She's not anywhere."

"Not in the house?" shouted Miller. "Are you crazy? You mean she's out in this storm? . . . Go up into the garret. She'll be there with some of her old gadgets. That's her playground, and she's nine tenths baby, still."

Of that, Mortimer heard only a whisper that died behind him; he was too full of his own plans and problems. He went back into the patio, untied Chico, and rode out through the patio entrance. The dust-blast half blinded him, instantly, but he turned the mule across the sweep of the wind and headed Chico toward Poplar Springs.

### XIII ON THE TRAIL

Mortimer got three miles of comparatively easy breathing to begin his journey. He saw the whole face of the countryside, sand-buried or sand-swept, and the trail recognizable from time to time, dots and dashes of it in the midst of obliteration.

He had passed the abandoned Carter place, with the sand heaped against the windward walls like shadows of brightness rather than dark, before the storm came at him again like a herd of sky-high elephants, throwing up their trunks and trampling the earth to black smoke. It sounded like a herd of elephants all trumpeting together. He thought he had seen the worst of the business before this, but that black boiling up of trouble was as thick as pitch.

He put his head down and endured, endlessly, while Chico, through that choking smother, found the dots and dashes of the disappearing trail with a faultless instinct. It seemed to Mortimer that the land was like a living body, now bleeding to death. The work of innumerable centuries was rushing about him like a nightmare.

Then Chico stumbled on something soft, and shied. Mortimer turned the shaft of his pocket torch down through the murk and saw the body of a horse on the ground. It was Hampton. He knew it by the unforgettable streak of white, like a light on the forehead.

He dismounted. Sand was heaped along the back of the dead horse, half burying the body, but the tail blew out



with an imitation of life along the wind. Sand filled the dead eyes. The left foreleg was broken below the knee. There was a round bullet hole above the temple that had brought quick death to the thoroughbred. What he guessed back there at Miller's house was true. Lou had headed for town, perhaps in hope of bringing back men of the law to restore peace to the Chappany Valley. She had stripped saddle and girth from Hampton. That meant she was somewhere not far away at this time, with the storm overwhelming her. The saddle would give her a bit of shelter and a shield behind which she could breathe.

He narrowed his eyes to the thinnest slit and held up his hands to turn the immediate edge of the wind, but the rolling darkness showed him only its own face as he rode the mule in circles around the dead body of Hampton. The electric torch was like a lance-shaft, a brittle thing that lengthened or broke off short according to the density of the waves of storm that swept upon him. Turning into the wind was like going up a steep hill. Turning away from it was like lurching down a slope.

After a second or third circle he gave up hope, and yet he kept on looking for a sign of her. His eyes saw only

splinterings and watery breakings of the torchlight, now; they were so filled with fine silt. Then a ghost stepped into the patch of the ray, and it was the girl.

The wind whipped her hair forward into a ragged fluttering of light about her face, and she came on with one hand held out, feeling her way. She thought Mortimer was Sam Pearson and she stumbled on toward the light, crying out, "Sam! God bless you, dear old Sam! I knew you were my last chance. But I thought . . . never could find . . ."

The wind blew her words to tattered phrases. It had reddened her eyes like weeping. "Hampton—beautiful—gone—" she was saying.

The wind thrust her into his arms. There was no strength in all of her except the hands to hold on. He turned and made a windbreak for her. The storm lifted his bandanna from the back of his neck with deliberate malice. The flying sand pricked his skin with a million needle points. Sometimes the drift came bucketing at him with a force that staggered him on his planted feet. He had to hold up the girl, too. She was a good weight. He thought of a loose sack with a hundred and twenty-five pounds of Kansas wheat in it. She said, "I would have gone crazy with fear. But I kept on tying to the thought of you, Sam."

He knew he ought to tell her at once that he was not Sam Pearson, but he could not tell her. He was a thief stealing this moment out of her life, a guilty but inexpressible happiness. The flashlight showed the dust leaping past them, giving a face to the scream of the wind.

She said, "Father, if he guessed where I was, would simply go plunging out and be lost. But I thought of you, Sam, making up your mind slowly, coming slowly. I knew you wouldn't want to waste me. You wouldn't want to waste all the time you've put in teaching me things. And I knew you'd find me . . ."

"Don't say it," said Mortimer.

His voice put the strength back into her. As her body stiffened, he knew that it was the strength of shock and horror. He turned the light so that it struck upon their faces. No, it was not horror and disgust that he saw, but a profound wonder. The wind kept whipping her hair out like a ragged moment of light in the darkness of the storm. She still held to him.

"*You* came for me?" she asked.

He wanted to bring her back closer into his arms. He wanted to tell her that it wasn't hard to find her; he could have found her anywhere because there was an instinct that would always show him the way. But he couldn't say that. He had to be honest.

"*You* came for me?" she had asked.

"Partly for you," said Mortimer.

All at once she was a thousand leagues away from him though she had merely taken one step back.

"Take Chico. He'll pull us through," said Mortimer, and helped her up into the saddle.

He should have said something else. Now she was despising him more than ever, as a gross, stupid, grotesque fool; or as a brute who saved her life not for love or pity,



but from a sheer grinding sense of duty. He felt that he had lost his chance and that it would never come again.

Chico was the captain of the voyage, for through the whirl his instinct clung to the trail; Mortimer clung to a stirrup leather and floundered on, hoping that his knees would not give way.

When the sand and flying silt he breathed had choked the wise old mule, he halted, with his head down. Then Mortimer would swab out the nostrils and wash out the mouth of Chico. Sometimes, as he worked, the light from the pocket torch showed him the wind-bleared face of the girl, like a body adrift in the sea.

It was not always thick darkness. Sometimes the sky cleared a little, as long rents tore through the whirling explosions of dust, and then by daylight they saw the immensity of the clouds that rolled through the upper heavens and dragged their skirts along the ground.

They had gone on for hours when Mortimer, floundering through a darker bit of twilight, jostled heavily against Chico. The girl halted the mule and stood on the ground offering the reins and the saddle to Mortimer. He was staggering with weariness, but this offer seemed to him an insulting challenge to his manhood. For answer, he picked her up and pitched her, like a child, high into the saddle. A sweep of the flashlight showed her face saying angry words which the wind blotted out.

Then they went forward again, with the anger clean gone from him.

An age of desperate struggle followed, with his knees

trembling under his weight; and then something cried above him in the wind. It was the girl, pointing. He was able to see, though blurred and dimly, the outlines of Poplar Springs immediately before them!

A moment later they were in the town, they were approaching a light, a door was opening, they were entering a heavenly peace, with the hands of the storm removed and the voice of the storm shut out.

#### XIV JIM HANCOCK

He lay on his back on the floor, coughing up black mud and choking on it. A young lad swabbed off his face, and said, "Your eyes are terrible. I never saw such eyes. Doesn't it hurt terrible even to wink? Can you see anything?"

"Get that mule into shelter and water him, will you?" said Mortimer.

"He's fixed up already," answered the lad.

Mortimer groaned and stretched out his arms crosswise. The great fatigue was flowing with a shudder out of his body; the hard floor soaked it up. He closed his eyes. Afterward there were a thousand things to do. This was only a brief instant of rest between rounds and then the hardest part of the fight was to come.

He heard a woman's voice cry out from another room, "They're from the Chappany! They've come clear down the Chappany! This is Louise Miller!"

Someone jumped across the room toward Mortimer. He opened his burning eyes and saw a man with a cropped

gray head leaning over him and shaking a finger in his face. "You didn't come down the Chappany!" he shouted. "Did you come down the Chappany through all that storm?"

"We came down the Chappany," said Mortimer.

"Bud, I'll take care of him. You run get Mr. Sloan and Pop Enderby and Jiggs Dawson and tell 'em they're going to hear what's happening in the Chappany. If it's blowin' away, Poplar Springs is gunna dry up and fade out. We don't live on nothing much but the Chappany trade."

Mr. Sloan, the banker, and Enderby, the big cattleman, and Dawson, of the General Store, were only three among thirty when Mortimer sat up to face the crowd that poured into the house. They looked at big Mortimer in a painful silence, those thirty men who were packed across one end of the room. The front door kept opening and people stamped in from the storm, and hushed their footfalls when they saw what was in progress. Now and then the voice of the storm receded and Mortimer could hear the painful, excited breathing of those people in the hall.

Nobody talked except Oliver Sloan, the banker, and he was the only one of the visitors who sat down. He was a huge, wide man with a weight of sagging flesh that seemed to be exhausting his vital forces. In that silence he asked the questions and Mortimer answered.

"How's it look in general?"

"Bad," said Mortimer.

"Hear from the Starrett place?"

"Yes. It's a sand-heap."

"Over by Benson's Ford?"

Don't you get any telephone messages?" asked Mortimer.

"All our lines are down. Hear from over by Benson's Ford?"

"I heard yesterday. The only thing that's left over there is hardpan."

Half a dozen men drew in long breaths, drinking up that bad news. In Poplar Springs lived retired ranchers from all over the range.

"What about McIntyre's?" asked Sloan.

"The sand is fence-high," said Mortimer.

"The Hancock place . . . that's your own place, isn't it?"

"The soil is holding there. It's only going in spots," said Mortimer.

"That's your work," said the banker wearily. "You said that you'd button down the topsoil; and you've done it?"

"I've done it," said Mortimer. He broke out: "I wish I could have helped the whole range. I wish I could have taught them. It's a poor happiness to me to save my own land and see the rest go up in smoke."

No one said anything until the banker spoke again. He paid no attention to Mortimer's last protestation. "Jenkins' place?" he asked.

"Those hills sheltered that land pretty well," said Mortimer, "but the sand is spilling over the edge of the hills and gradually covering the good soil."

"See Crawford's?"

"Fence-high with drift."

"The Grand ranch?" asked Sloan. He looked up with desperate eyes at Mortimer.

"I'm sorry," answered Mortimer slowly.

"It's gone, is it?" whispered the banker.

"Hardpan," said Mortimer.

Sloan pushed himself up out of his chair. How many of his mortgages were on mere heaps of blow-sand or hardpan acres, no one could tell; but from the ruin in his face the crowd pushed back to either side and let him out into the hall.

Mortimer called after him, "But there's two thirds of the Chappany still holding. The worst of it there is that the water holes are silted up; even Miller's lakes are gone; and Charles Hancock won't let the cows come to his water. Cattle out there by the thousands are going to die. Is there any way of persuading Jim Hancock to give his son orders to let those cattle in to water?"

"Persuade him?" shouted Sloan. "I'll wring the orders out of his withered old neck with my own hands! Persuade him! We'll take the hide off his back, and see if that will persuade him!"

The whole mob poured out from the house; among the rest, Mortimer had one glimpse of the pale face of Lou Miller, and then she was lost in the crowd. They moved into the street. They flowed against the rush of the dust storm into the General Merchandise Store of Poplar Springs.

To Mortimer's watery eyes the whole store was like a

scene under the sea. A score of men lounged around the stove, retaining the winter habit in the midst of the hot weather. There was constant coughing, for the fine dust which was adrift in the air constantly irritated the throats of the men. In a corner two very old men leaned over a checker game, one with a fine flow of white hair and beard, and the other as bald and red as a turkey gobbler, with a hanging double fold of loose red skin beneath the chin. He gripped a clay pipe with his toothless gums. The pipe was polished and brown-black with interminable years of use. This was Jim Hancock. In his two years on the ranch, Mortimer had seen him only once before.

"You talk to him first," said Sloan.

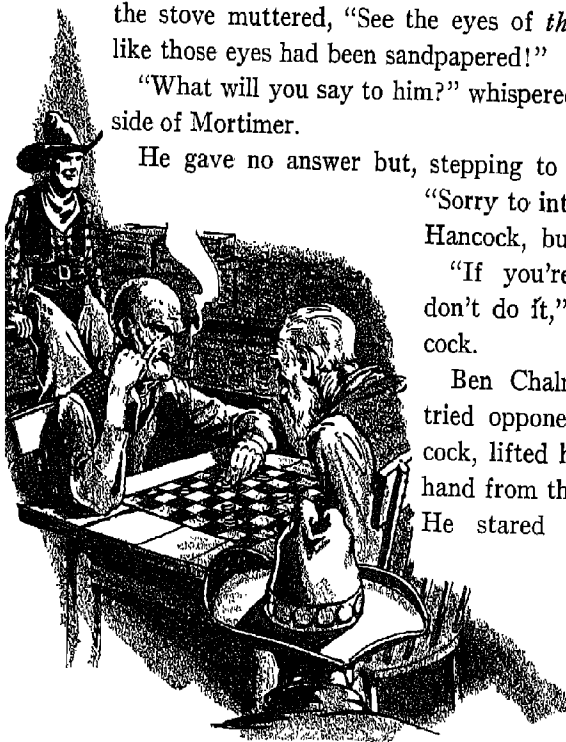
Mortimer walked toward the players. Someone near the stove muttered, "See the eyes of *that* one? Looks like those eyes had been sandpapered!"

"What will you say to him?" whispered the girl at the side of Mortimer.

He gave no answer but, stepping to the table, said, "Sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Hancock, but . . ."

"If you're sorry for it, don't do it," said Jim Hancock.

Ben Chalmers, the time-tried opponent of old Hancock, lifted his eyes and his hand from the checkerboard. He stared briefly at the



interloper, and dragged his hand slowly down through his beard as he returned his attention to the game.

"Do you remember me, Mr. Hancock?" persisted Mortimer.

"I never heard of nobody I less remembered," said Hancock, without looking up.

"I'm Mortimer, from your place on the Chappany," said he.

"Then why don't you stay there?" asked Hancock.

"Miller's lakes are choked with sand."

"I wish Miller was lying choked in one of 'em," said Hancock.

"The water holes all over that part of the range are silted up, and so are most of the tanks. There's a water famine. Cows are going to die by thousands unless they can get water," explained Mortimer.

"Cows have died by the thousands many a time before this," replied Hancock.

"Thousands and thousands of cattle are milling around the fence between the Miller place and your two lakes," said Mortimer.

"Let 'em mill," answered Hancock.

"More than cattle will be lost," stated Mortimer.

Hancock jerked up his head at last. "D'you see me playing a game of checkers, or don't you? Is a man gunna have a little peace in the world, or has he gotta be hounded into his grave by fools like you?"

"The men who own the cattle . . . they won't stand by and see them die of thirst. They'll cut the wire of the

fences and let them through. It means gun fighting," said Mortimer.

"Let 'em cut, then," said Hancock. "What do I care?"

"Charlie is out with his cowpunchers and rifles to keep those cows back," the voice of Louise Miller said. "He intends to shoot."

Mortimer turned to her. She had sifted through to the front of the crowd.

"I hope he don't miss, then," said Jim Hancock. "Charlie always was a boy that wasn't worth nothing except when it comes to a fight. But, when it comes to a pinch, he's the out-fightingest feller that I ever saw. Now go away, Lou, and don't bother me no more."

Mortimer cried out, "If the fight starts, there are two hundred armed men to take care of Charlie and his boys. They'll wash over them. A dozen men may die, but Charlie's sure to be one of them!"

"I hope he is," answered Jim Hancock. "It'll save a lot of trouble for decent people if Charlie dies now."

Mortimer moved suddenly with a gesture of surrender. Sloan, the banker, stepped in beside him, and remarked, "I'll try my hand . . . Jim, there's been nearly enough grazing land wiped off the range to ruin Poplar Springs; and if the cattle die this town'll ruin mighty fast. There's nobody but you can give the cows a second chance, without there's a war. Are you going to sit there and let everything go to ruin?"

In place of an answer in words, old Jim Hancock reached back to his hip, produced a long-barreled, single-action



forty-five, and laid it on his lap. Then he returned to his contemplation of his next move, merely saying, "Sorry there's been all this infernal palavering, Ben."

"I don't care what you're sorry about," said Ben. "You're spoilin' the game with all this fool talk."

## XV CATERPILLAR TRACTOR

Another man from the crowd began to shout at old Jim Hancock with a loud voice, but Mortimer had seen enough. He felt sick and weak and utterly defeated. He jerked the door open and went across the street, leaning his body aslant into the thrust of the wind, to Porson's Hotel. In the vacant lot beside it the tarpaulin cover which housed a caterpillar tractor flapped and strained like clumsy wings trying to take flight in the wind.

In the lobby he found only two dusty cowpunchers who stood at one end of the room. Old Rip Porson, himself, leaned in an attitude of profoundly gloomy thought.

"Ain't I seen you before?" asked Rip.

"Once or twice," agreed Mortimer.

"You wasn't connected with a fight here a while back, was you?" asked Porson. His angry, birdlike eyes stared into Mortimer's face. "Because," said Porson, "there was thirteen coyotes in here, along with one man."

"That's him, Rip," said one of the cowpunchers. "I reckon that's Mortimer, that done the kicking, and the others were them that were kicked."

"Are you him?" said Rip Porson, sighing. "I was kind of half hoping that I'd have a chance to open up and

speaking the mind that's in me to one of them low-down hounds. There used to be *men* on this range, but now there ain't nothing but legs and loud talk, and no hands at all," said Rip Porson. "Now we gotta import strangers like you. So here's to you and more like you, I say!"

Somewhere through the storm came the lowing of a cow, as though she mourned for her calf, and Mortimer's eye wandered as he thought of the milling thousands of foredoomed cattle up the Chappany. A frosty glass with fresh mint sprigs that stood beside the clerk caught his eye, with its suggestion of that green and tender spring which would not come again to such a great portion of the range. He thought, also, of that stubborn old Jim Hancock, all leather, without blood or heart.

"Can you mix the sort of julep that really talks to a man's insides?" asked Mortimer.

"Me? Can I mix a julep?" asked Rip Porson. "I don't give a darn what time of year it is, the fellow that drinks my mint julep knows it's Christmas."

"Build me a pair of them, then," said Mortimer. "Build them long and build them strong." And he laughed a little, feebly, as he spoke. A moment later he was carrying the high, frosted glasses into the General Merchandise Store.

As he went in, Sloan was going out, with a gray, weary face. He looked at Mortimer with unseeing eyes and passed on; but the remainder of the crowd was packed thick around the checker game where old Jim Hancock, with the revolver on his lap, still struggled through the silent fight against Ben Chalmers. Each had five crowned

pieces. Mortimer put down one mint julep at the right hand of each player and stepped back.

"It's no good," said a sour-faced man. "You can't soften up that old codger. There ain't any kindness left in him."

Ben Chalmers' hand left its position beneath his chin, extended, wavered for a moment in the air, seized on a piece, and moved it. Continuing in the same slow, abstracted manner, the hand touched the glass, raised it, and tipped the drink at his lips. Jim Hancock, stirred by the same hypnotic influence, lifted his glass at the same time. Hancock put down his drink with jarring haste.

"There's only one state in the Union where a mint julep is made proper," declared Jim Hancock. "And that's Kentucky."

"The Union be hanged," said Ben Chalmers, "but the only state is Virginia."

"Kentucky," said Jim Hancock.

"Virginia," said Chalmers.

"Have I been wastin' my time all these years with an ornery old fool that don't know good juleps from bad?" demanded Hancock.

"You come from too far west to know good juleps from bad," said Chalmers. "When I think of a man of your



years that ain't come to an understanding of a right julep . . ."

"East of Louisville, a right mint julep ain't made," said Hancock. "I'm drinkin' to Kentucky and the bluegrass, and not to points east and north . . ." He took a long drink of the mint julep and made another face.

"In points east of Kentucky," said Ben Chalmers, "this here country got its start. When Washington and the immortal Jefferson was doing their work, Kentucky was left to the wild turkeys and the Indians."

"The breed run out in Virginia," said Jim Hancock. "The real men went to Kentucky about a hundred years ago."

"An outrage and a lie!" said Ben Chalmers.

He pushed himself back with such violence that the table rocked to and fro. The kings on the checkerboard lost their crowns and shuffled out of place as Ben Chalmers rose.

"A Virginia gentleman," said Ben Chalmers, "wouldn't go to Kentucky except to spit!"

"Who said Virginians were gentle and who said that they were men?" asked Jim Hancock, rubbing his chin with his fist.

Ben Chalmers uttered an inarticulate cry, fled to the door and through it, into the twilight of the storm outside.

"It is a great state, that Kentucky," suggested Mortimer.

"Son," said Jim Hancock, "maybe you ain't quite the

fool that I been making you out. Kentucky is the only state in the country where they breed men and hosses right."

"They breed horses and men with plenty of bone and blood and nerve," suggested Mortimer.

"They do," said Hancock.

"Which is why nobody can understand why you're afraid to go back up the Chappany and keep Charlie from killing a dozen men or so and winding up with a rope around his neck," continued Mortimer.

"Afraid? Who said I was afraid?" demanded Hancock, jumping up from the table.

"Shake hands on it, then, and we'll go together as soon as the storm gives us a chance," invited Mortimer.

"Confound the storm! Why should we wait for the storm to give us a chance?" asked Hancock.

Beyond the window, dimly through the rush and whirl of the dust, Mortimer saw the tarpaulin which covered the caterpillar tractor flapping in the wind like a bird awkwardly tied to the ground. Nothing in the world could move like that caterpillar, through all weathers, over all kinds of ground.

"Who owns that caterpillar?" he asked, pointing.

"It's mine," said the manager of the General Store.

"Let me rent it to go up the Chappany," said Mortimer.

"Rent it? I'll give it to you!" cried the manager. "And there's nothing else that will take you where you want to go!"

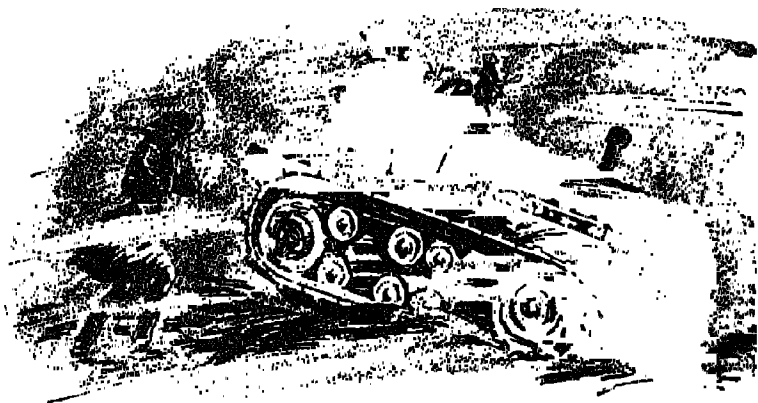
The big machine was ready for use, with a full tank of

gas; and the engine started at a touch. Mortimer tried the controls, rear, left, and center, and the machine answered readily to the levers. Old Jim Hancock, thoroughly equipped with goggles, huddled himself into as small a space as possible on the floorboards. They started without ceremony. A great outbreak of shouting from the crowd seemed to Mortimer only a farewell cheer. He waved his hand in answer and shoved the tractor against the full sweep of the wind. He had full canteens of water and old Jim Hancock on board, and that was all he asked for, except the entire ten miles an hour that the caterpillar could make. That ten miles, added to the cutting edge of the wind, blew the dust right through the wet bandanna that masked him, nose and mouth; it blew the fine dust down to the bottom of his lungs.

Well, there is such a thing as dust pneumonia. He thought of that as the machine hit a five-foot sand drift and went through it partly climbing, partly a wallow, with a flag of dust blowing and snapping in the wind behind.

They entered the wide mouth of the Chappany Valley as the tractor put its nose into the soft of a bog, a water hole entirely clogged by drifted silt. Mortimer was backing out of this when a masked figure came up beside him, staggering, with outreaching hands.

He knew who it was. He knew instinctively, with a great stroke of the heart. He stopped the caterpillar clear of the bog, pulled Lou Miller into the machine, and put her on the floor. She must have ridden on the bucking, pitching tail of the tractor all the way from Poplar Springs, with the choking torrents of the dust raised by



the machine added to the blind onpouring of the storm. She was almost stifled, now, as he pulled down her bandanna and flashed his torch into a face begrimed and mud-caked to the eyes. Half a canteen squirted over her rinsed her white again, but still she lay gasping. He put his lips to her ears and called, "Your lungs . . . are they burning up? Can you get your breath?"

"I'm all right. Go on!" she answered.

"I'm turning back to Poplar Springs," he answered.

She caught his arm with both hands and shook it. "If you turn back, I'll throw myself out of the tractor," she cried to him desperately. "Go on! Go on! Think of what's happening up the Chappany!"

"Ay, go on! Go on!" yelled old Jim Hancock with a sudden enthusiasm.

Mortimer went on. The wind-beaten lights of the machine showed him a ten-foot sand drift, curving at the top like a wave about to break. He put on full speed and crashed through it. Sand flowed like heavy water over the entire tractor. He was blinded utterly, but the vibration of the racing caterpillar bucketed out the cargo of sand

swiftly, like water. If the fine dust did not get to the bearings, and if the motor was not choked, they might get through.

Another sand wave heaved vaguely before him. He headed at full speed for it, straightening the nose of the caterpillar like the head of a spear for a target . . .

Far up the Chappany the darkness of the day's end joined the shadow of the storm, and with the coming of the thicker darkness John Miller prepared for the final action. While there was even a flicker of daylight to give the rifles of Charlie Hancock opportunity to aim he would not let his men move forward, but now the night had thickened the air of the valley to soup. Somewhere above the dust the moon was shining, but little moonlight penetrated to the earth.

A floundering horse with a rider bent forward along its neck came by, the rider yelling, "Miller! Hi, Miller!"

"Here!" shouted Miller, and the rider turned in toward him.

The horseman leaned out to grip the pommel of Miller's saddle, and coughed and choked for a moment, head down, before he could speak. Miller took him by the shoulders and shouted at his ear, "Shorty, was she at the Grimes place? Did you find her at Hogan's? Is there any word?"

"Gone!" gasped Shorty. "Dave Weller come in and says she ain't at Parker's, neither. There ain't no word."

"The storm has her," said Miller.

He pulled up his bandanna and spat down-wind. But he could breathe no better after that.



"There's twenty-one years of my life gone," said John Miller. "And God be kind to her . . ." He gave the word to attack then. The men were eager for action.

They had waited long enough, they felt, and the great, mournful song of the thirsty cattle was maddening to their ears. The whole throng of ranchers and cow hands poured into the Chappany.

They came with enthusiasm and a determination to rush Charlie Hancock and his men off the face of the earth, but when they put their eyes on the actual field of battle, some of their enthusiasm left them. Near the edge of the Hancock lake a flat-topped mesa jumped up a hundred feet above the valley floor. To climb the boulders and flat walls of the mesa was hard work, even in full daylight without the burden of a gun; to clamber up the height through these streaks of dark and the light of the dust-submerged moon, with a rifle to manage and good marksmen taking aim from above, looked very bad work, indeed. If the storm had offered complete darkness, they could have fumbled their way along somehow and grappled with Hancock and his men, but now the sky was half the time covered and half the time lighted through rents and explosive openings. Those gleams were sufficiently frequent to give Hancock's riflemen an excellent chance to command the approaches to their rock.

Miller sent some of his people to climb the bluff above the lake, but when they reached the high land they were able to make out only glimpses of the men among the rocks; and the distance was too great for any sort of accurate shooting. Some of the ranchers wanted to cut the

fences and let the cattle go trooping down to water, anyway, but it was readily pointed out to them that Hancock would enjoy nothing more than a chance to practice marksmanship on dumb cattle before he started on human targets.

It was a clumsy problem. The storm kept bringing the men of the range the wailful chorus of the cattle. They knew the cows were dying one after another, going down from weakness and being trampled by the milling herd. Miller's men wanted blood and wanted it badly, but who was to lead the rush against that well-defended rock?

There was a big rancher named Tucker Weed among Miller's following, a fellow with a voice as loud as that of a champion hog-caller from Missouri. It was he who raised a sound as shrilling as a bugle call and drew the attention of everyone to a pair of lights that staggered up the valley into the breath of the storm.

"What is it?" yelled Tucker Weed. "It can't be an automobile. No automobile could head into this smother. What is it?"

John Miller saw the lights disappear, then reflect dimly on the whirl of the storm as the beam of light pointed straight at the sky.

"It's something that knows a fence when it finds one," said Miller. "It's hit a fence with a sand drift backed against it . . . What can it be?"

The two lights swerved down again, pointed at the earth, and then wavered out into the level of the valley, approaching the huge, melancholy sea-sound of the bellowing cattle. It ran straight for only a moment, however,

and then swerved to the left and headed for Charlie Hancock's fortress.

## XVI AFTER THE STORM

The mourning chorus of the cattle behind the Miller fences had been with them for miles, but now, in a greater burst of light, as the black of the sky opened in a wide central opening, they could see the living acres that milled beyond the fences.

Old Jim Hancock stood up to see, and Mortimer steadied him by gripping his coat at the small of the back.

"Why, bless my old heart and eyes!" said Jim Hancock. "Why didn't you tell me there was so many thirsty cows up here on the Chappany?"

It made no difference that he *had* been told. They had a demonstration of another sort a moment later when half a dozen young steers, finding some low place in the fence or, more likely, climbing over dead bodies that gave them a take-off to jump the wire, came clear of the fences and rushed at a gallop toward the water of the lake. The leader, after half a dozen strides, bucked into the air, landed on his nose, and lay still. Another and another dropped. From the top of the rock beside Hancock Lake little sparks of light showed where the rifles were playing. The half-dozen steers lay dead long, long before they brought their thirsty muzzles near the water.

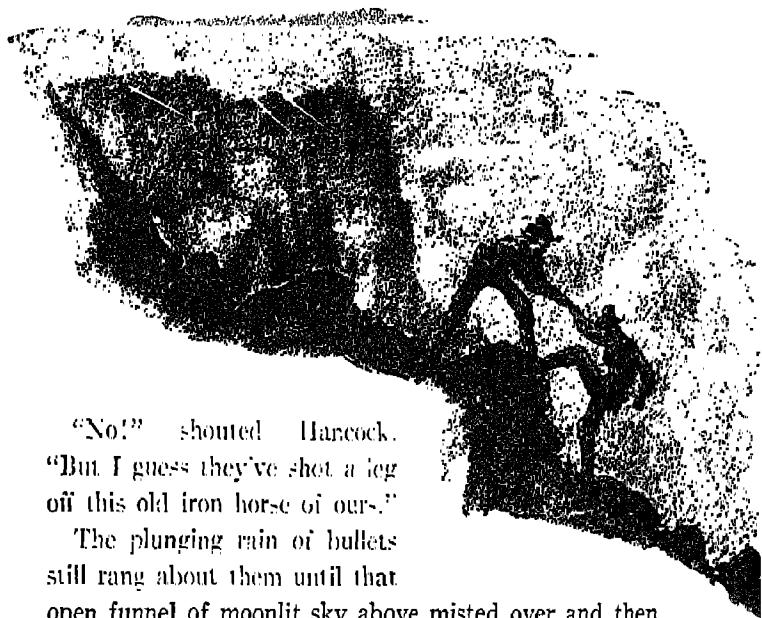
"There he is!" shouted Jim Hancock. "There's that doggone boy of mine, up there. Good shooting, Charlie! Good shooting, old feller! . . . But, by crackey, I'm gunna make you wish you'd never seen a gun!"

A sweep of horsemen poured suddenly about them out of the night. As he saw the masked faces and the guns, Mortimer brought the caterpillar to a halt. The cow-punchers were thick around them in an instant, and a voice was yelling, "It's the dirt doctor and old poison-face Jim Hancock himself . . . and there's Lou Miller, as much alive as you and me . . ."

There was Miller, himself, at the side of the machine; and now Lou was lifted tenderly out of the tractor into her father's arms, while Jim Hancock piped, "Clear away from us. Leave me get at that Charlie of mine. I'm gunna teach him what comes of spoiling good beef when he ain't hungry."

Someone reached in and smote Mortimer's shoulder; someone shouted, "Great work, old-timer!" And then the crowd was drawn back and he shoved the caterpillar on toward the rock through a moment of darkness that swallowed the entire picture instantly. The headlights sometimes showed the way a hundred feet ahead; sometimes the brilliant cone choked off a stride away and they were charging blindly into the smoke and smother of the wind; then the sky split open and light rushed back over the Chappany. They were under the great rock. They were not fifty paces from the rising wall, when a whole volley of bullets struck them. The headlights went out. One of the endless tracks stopped. The caterpillar began to turn clumsily.

Mortimer caught at old Hancock and pulled him to the floor of the tractor. He shut off the engine. "Are you hurt, Jim?" he asked.



"No!" shouted Hancock.  
"But I guess they've shot a leg  
off this old iron horse of ours."

The plunging rain of bullets  
still rang about them until that  
open funnel of moonlit sky above misted over and then  
closed suddenly with a river of black.

"Will you go on with me, Jim?" shouted Mortimer.  
"Will you try to climb up to them with me and talk to  
Charlie?"

"Don't be a young idiot," said Jim Hancock. "I'll go  
alone. Why should you let 'em get at you with their  
guns?"

But Mortimer went with him. He hooked his arm  
around the hard, withered body of the old man and fairly  
dragged him through the blind current of the storm until  
they found the loom of the rock, and then, suddenly, the  
wall itself. They paused there a moment, gasping, cough-  
ing as though they had just escaped from the smoke of a  
burning house. Then they started up. The big boulders  
at the foot of the wall offered stepping-stones to begin

with, but above them came almost a sheer rise. They had to wait for the next break in the windy darkness of the sky before they could continue, taking advantage of a fissure here and a projection there. Mortimer, keeping just below, helped the old fellow strongly up while Hancock muttered, "I'll fix him . . . beef butcher! . . ."

They were well up the rock when guns crackled above them rapidly, like pitchpine burning. A bullet streaked a white scar across the rock in front of Mortimer's face; another raked him through the back muscles with an exquisite stroke of agony; then a shot that felt like a fist-stroke and knife-thrust combined lanced him in the side. He had a good handhold on a projecting spur of rock, so he managed to keep his place; and when old Hancock dropped, suddenly, he caught him by the coat and held him swinging out over empty space, though that effort cost him nearly the last of his strength.

A mercy of the wind closed up the gap in the sky at that moment and in the darkness the gunfire ended.

Old Jim, agile as a dried-up tomcat, went clawing up the rock, screeching, "Charlie! Charlie! Put down them guns or I'll . . ."

Mortimer followed the inspired fury of the old fellow, but his strength was running out of him. The light came back a moment later and made him shrink as though it had been the flash of a knife. And then he saw Jim Hancock standing on the lip of the rock above him, shaking one fist above his head. Men loomed beside him. Charlie's soft bulk appeared. And Mortimer drew himself up to the flat top of the mesa. When he got there, he had to lie

out flat. The pain left his side and burned in his brain.

He could hear Jim Hancock shouting, "Get down there! I hope they drill you full of lead when you come to 'em, begging, with your hands up. Get down there and tell 'em to open the fences up and let the cows through! Save your face if you can—tell 'em it was a joke! Your ma died for you, and you been nothing but trouble to me all your life! Now get out of my sight!"

There seemed to be light still in the sky, but a darkness crawled out of Mortimer's brain and covered his eyes.

After a time Mortimer saw that he was lying near a fire which burned behind a screen of boulders at the top of the mesa. A withered forearm with a bandage around it appeared in his line of sight. A hand lifted his head.

"Yes, sir," said Jim Hancock, "if you pass out, we're gunna string 'em up, and I'll help pull on the ropes. So you rest nice and easy."

It was an odd way of giving comfort. Mortimer tried to laugh a bit, but fingers of pain seemed to tear him half apart.

"I'm gunna lift up your head and leave you have a look at what's happening," said Hancock.

Slowly and carefully he lifted Mortimer's head and shoulders until he could look over the sloping top of the mesa and down into the valley of the Chappany. The storm was passing. Already the dust was thinner. The waters of Hancock Lake seemed to have living shores until Mortimer's eyes cleared a little. Then he could see the cattle ten and twenty deep as they drank up life and new strength.

"That's pretty good," said Mortimer. "I'm glad I saw that," he said.

"Don't talk," said Hancock. "We think they've got you drilled right through the lungs, and, if they have, talking is sure poison for you."

The darkness like living shadows in the corners of a room, began to crawl out over Mortimer's eyes. If he were shot through the lungs, he had to die. He was fairly sure that he was dying at that moment. "I've got to talk," he said.

"Take it easy!" commanded Hancock.

Mortimer forced out the words slowly: "Tell Lou Miller it never was a joke. I loved her. Tell her I loved her, but I don't blame her for the way she felt . . ."

He seemed to be walking, then, through infinite darkness, opening doors, feeling his way down blank walls, finding more doors, opening them, and something was whistling to him far away. He opened his eyes. It was the scream of the storm that he had been hearing, but it had been withdrawn again into the heart of the sky. The storm was over. There was peace in the valley of the Chappany.

Mortimer looked down the big arch of his chest and the great bandage which was being unwrapped by slender hands, unlike the hands one finds on a cattle range. His lips were saying, "Somebody promise to tell Lou Miller . . ."

Someone leaned over him, saying, "I know—darling!"

Now, by an effort of peering into distance, he made out



her face. She was much older. She was so drawn and white and tired that, to any ordinary eye, half of her beauty was surely gone; but his eye alone, which knew how to see her, found her far more beautiful than ever.

His chest lay bare as a voice said, "Don't let him talk."

"Make him stop talking, Lou," said John Miller's voice out of the darkness.

She touched Mortimer's lips, and he kissed her hand. Words were no good, after all. Touching her and looking at her was all that mattered.

The crisp voice of command said, "He's lost blood. He's lost buckets of blood, but I don't think . . . give me that probe."

A finger of red-hot pain entered Mortimer's breast, searched his side, and glided back.

"Certainly not!" said that voice of authority. "The man has ribs like the ribs of a ship. The bullet glanced around them, and his lungs were never scratched. He'll be back on his feet in a week."

The darkness covered Mortimer's eyes with a sudden hand, but through the shadow he could hear the sudden, joyful outcry of the girl he loved. Her voice faded out of his consciousness rapidly, but somewhere in his heart there echoed the promise of life and of happiness.



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